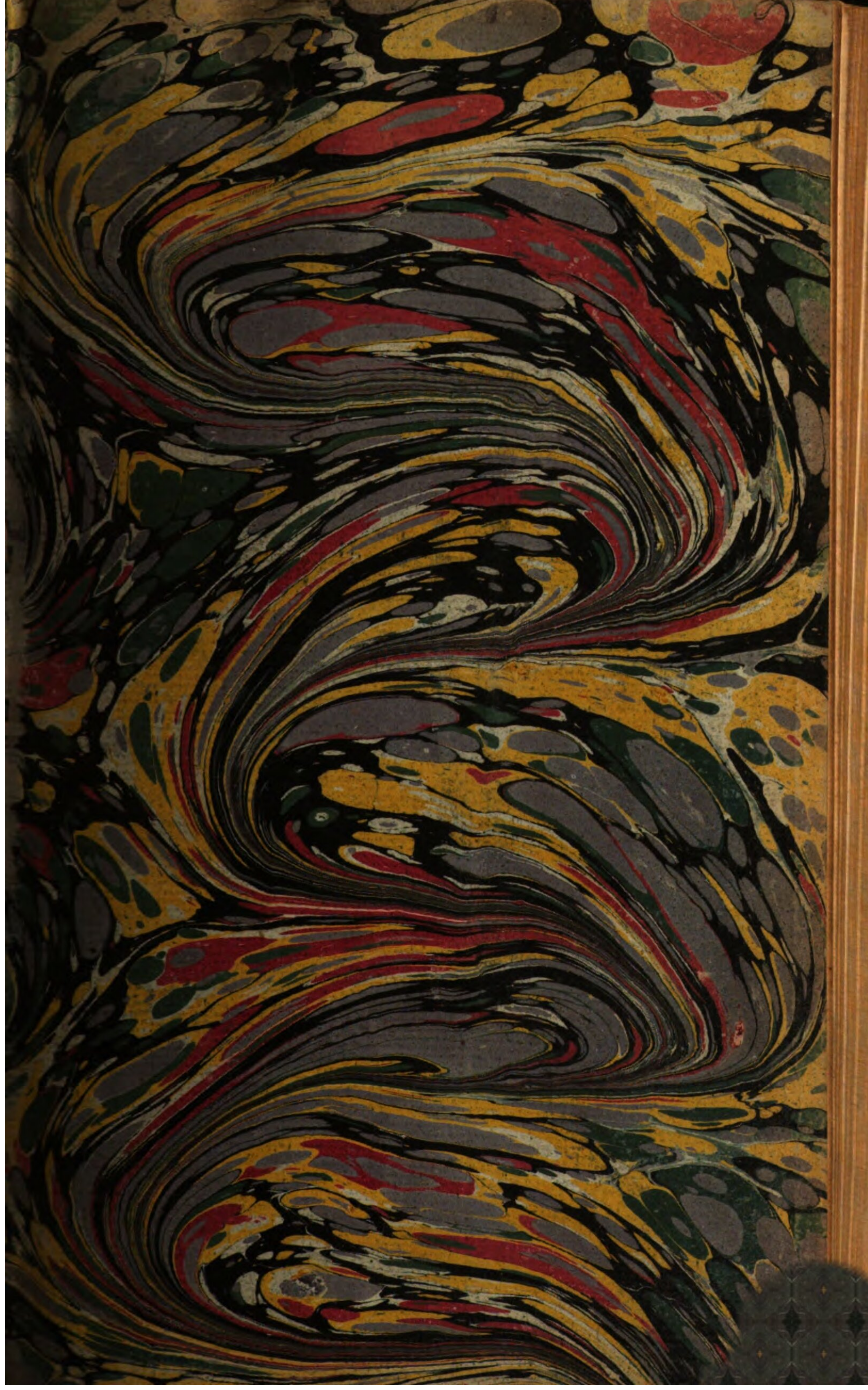






Shakspeare
p. o. angl. $360^{\frac{t}{t}}$

Shakespeare

Aug: 8. —

Edw. J. Fox

PALMERS

WILLIAM SHANLEY

VOLUME THE FIRST

1854

NEW YORK

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THE
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OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

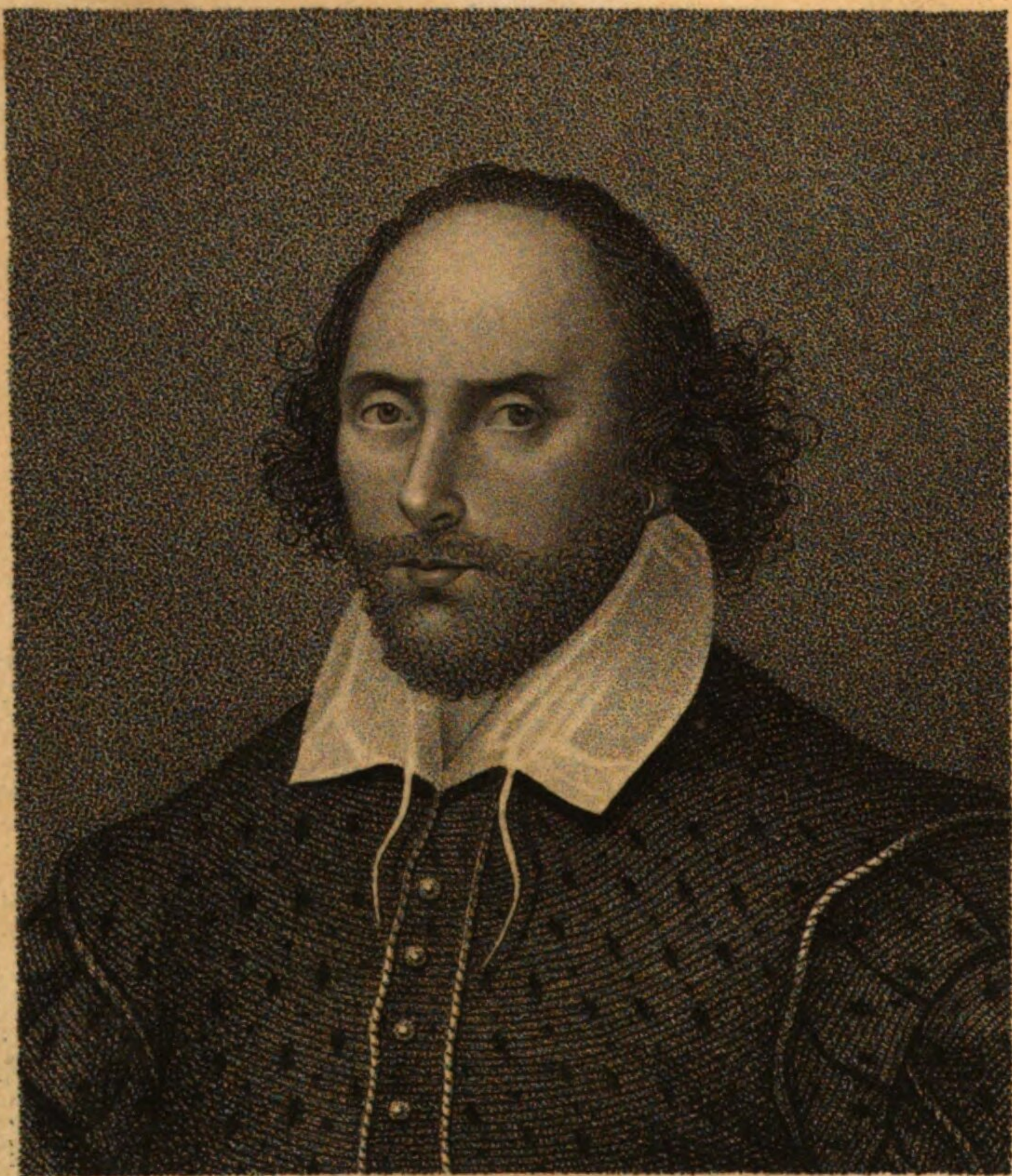
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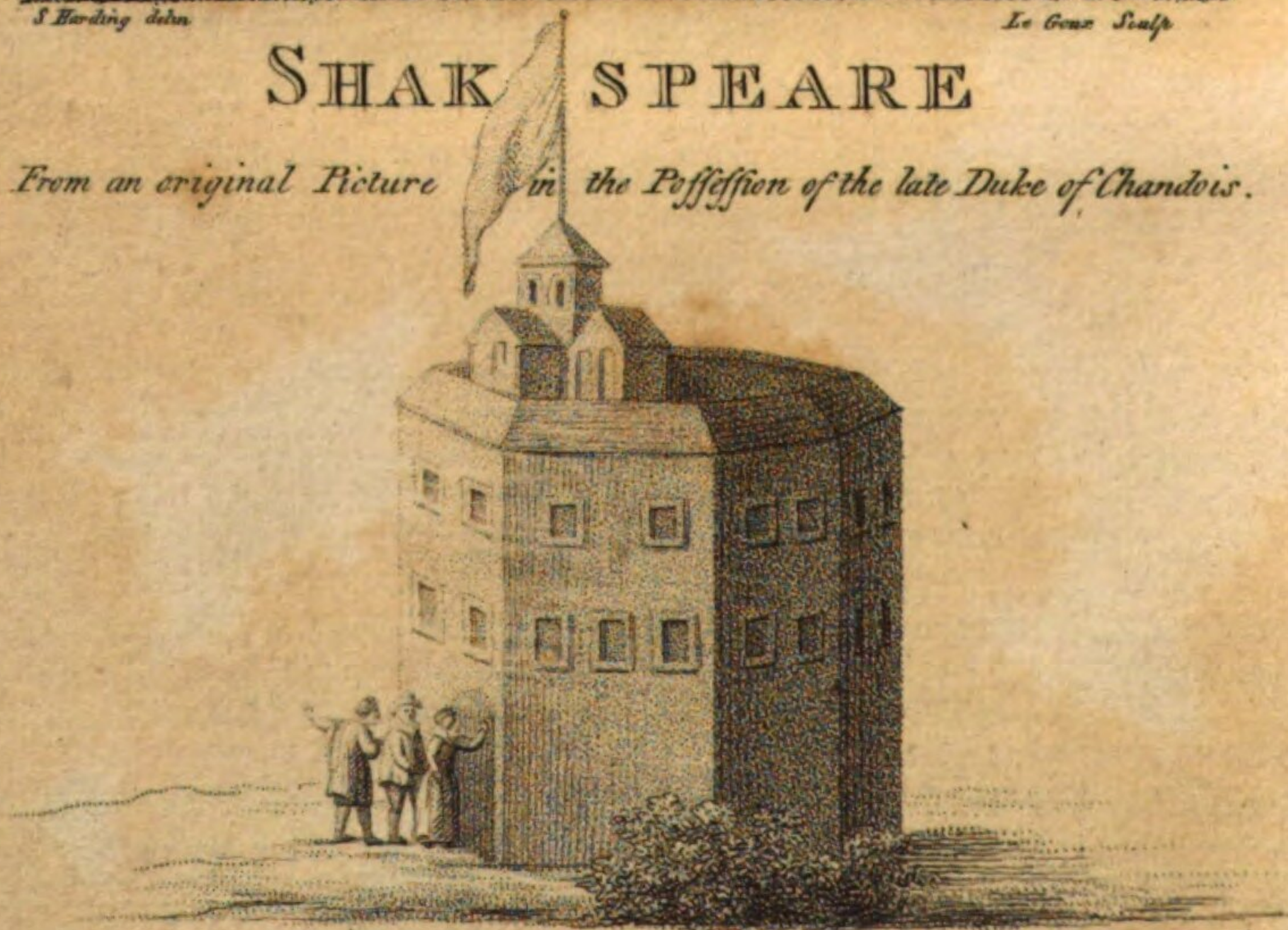


S. Harding delin.

Le Goux Sculp.

SHAK SPEARE

From an original Picture in the Possession of the late Duke of Chandois.



THE
PLAYS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.
IN FIFTEEN VOLUMES.

WITH THE
CORRECTIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
VARIOUS COMMENTATORS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

NOTES

BY

SAMUEL JOHNSON AND GEORGE STEEVENS.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

REVISED AND AUGMENTED

(WITH A GLOSSARIAL INDEX)

BY THE EDITOR OF DODSLEY'S COLLECTION OF
OLD PLAYS.

ΤΗΣ ΦΥΣΕΩΣ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΥΣ ΗΝ, ΤΟΝ ΚΑΛΑΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΒΡΕΧΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΝΟΥΝ.
Vet. Auct. apud. Suidam.

MULTA DIES, VARIUSQUE LABOR MUTABILIS ÆVI
RETULIT IN MELIUS, MULTOS ALTERNA REVISENS
LUSIT, ET IN SOLIDO RURSUS FORTUNA LOCAVIT.
Virgil.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. Longman, B. Law and Son, C. Dilly, J. Robson, J. Johnson,
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M. DCC. XCIII.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE reader may observe that, contrary to former usage, no head of Shakspeare is prefixed to the present edition of his Plays. The undisguised fact is this. The only portrait of him that even pretends to authenticity, by means of injudicious cleaning, or some other accident, has become little better than the "shadow of a shade."* The late Sir Joshua Reynolds indeed once suggested, that whatever person it was designed for, it might have been left, as it now appears, unfinished. Various copies and plates, however, are said at different times to have been made from it; but a regard for truth obliges us to confess that they are all unlike each other,† and convey no distinct resemblance of the poor remains of their avowed original. Of the drapery and curling hair exhi-

* Such, we think, were the remarks, that occurred to us several years ago, when this portrait was accessible. We wished indeed to have confirmed them by a second view of it; but a late accident in the noble family to which it belongs, has precluded us from that satisfaction.

† Vertue's portraits have been over-praised on account of their fidelity; for we have now before us six different heads of Shakspeare engraved by him, and do not scruple to assert that they have individually a different cast of countenance. *Cucullus non facit monachum*. The shape of our author's ear-ring and falling-band may correspond in them all, but where shall we find an equal conformity in his features?

Few objects indeed are occasionally more difficult to seize, than the slender traits that mark the character of a face; and the eye will often

bited in the excellent engravings of Mr. Vertue, Mr. Hall, and Mr. Knight, the painting does not afford a vestige; nor is there a feature or circumstance on the whole canvas, that can with minute precision be delineated.—We must add, that on very vague and dubious authority this head has hitherto been received as a genuine portrait of our author, who probably left behind him no such memorial of his face. As he was careless of the future state of his works, his solicitude might not have extended to the perpetuation of his looks. Had any portrait of him existed, we may naturally suppose it must have belonged to his family, who (as Mark Antony says of a hair of Cæsar) would

“ ——— have mention’d it within their wills,

“ Bequeathing it as a rich legacy

“ Unto their issue;”

and were there ground for the report that Shakspeare was the real father of Sir William D’Avenant, and that the picture already spoken of was painted for him, we might be tempted to observe with our author, that the

“ ——— bastard son

“ Was kinder to his father, than his daughters

“ Got ’twixt the natural sheets.”

But in support of either supposition sufficient evi-

detect the want of them, when the most exact mechanical process cannot decide on the places in which they are omitted.—Vertue, in short, though a laborious, was a very indifferent draughtsman, and his best copies too often exhibit a general instead of a particular resemblance.

dence has not been produced. The former of these tales has no better foundation than the vanity of our *degener Neoptolemus*, (see Vol. II. p. 428.)* and the latter originates from modern conjecture. The present age will probably allow the vintner's ivy to Sir William, but with equal justice will withhold from him the poet's bays.—To his pretensions of descent from Shakspeare, one might almost be induced to apply a ludicrous passage uttered by Fielding's *Phaeton in the Suds*:

“———— by all the parish boys I'm flamm'd:

“You the sun's son, you rascal! you be d——d.”

About the time when this picture found its way into Mr. Keck's hands,† the verification of por-

* Nor does the same piece of ancient scandal derive much weight from Aubrey's adoption of it. The reader who is acquainted with the writings of this absurd gossip, will scarcely pay more attention to him on the present occasion, than when he gravely assures us that “Anno 1670, not far from Cirencester was an apparition; being demanded whether a good spirit or a bad? returned no answer, but disappeared with a curious perfume and most melodious twang. Mr. W. Lilly believes it was a fairy.” See *Aubrey's Miscellanies*, edit. 1784, p. 114.—Aubrey, in short, was a dupe to every wag who chose to practise on his credulity; and would most certainly have believed the person who should have told him that Shakspeare himself was a natural son of Queen Elizabeth.

Mr. T. Warton has pleasantly observed (see p. 68. n. 3.) that he “cannot suppose Shakspeare to have been the father of a Doctor of Divinity who never laughed;” and—to waste no more words on Sir William D'Avenant,—let but our readers survey his heavy, vulgar, unmeaning face, and, if we mistake not, they will as readily conclude that Shakspeare “never help to make it.” So despicable, indeed, is his countenance as represented by Faithorne, that it appears to have sunk that celebrated engraver beneath many a common artist in the same line.

† See Vol. I. p. 29.

traits was so little attended to, that both the Earl of Oxford, and Mr. Pope, admitted a juvenile one of King James I. as that of Shakspeare.* Among the heads of illustrious persons engraved by Houbraiken, are several imaginary ones, beside Ben Jonson's and Otway's; and old Mr. Langford positively asserted that, in the same collection, the grandfather of Cock the auctioneer had the honour to personate the great and amiable Thurloe, secretary of state to Oliver Cromwell.

From the price of forty guineas paid for the supposed portrait of our author to Mrs. Barry, the real value of it should not be inferred. The possession of somewhat more animated than canvas, might have been included, though not specified, in a bargain with an actress of acknowledged gallantry.

Yet allowing this to be a mere fanciful insinuation, a rich man does not easily miss what he is ambitious to find. At least he may be persuaded

* Much respect is due to the authority of portraits that descend in families from heir to heir; but little reliance can be placed on them when they are produced for sale (as in the present instance) by alien hands, almost a century after the death of the person supposed to be represented; and then, (as Edmund says in *King Lear*) "come pat, like the catastrophe of the old comedy." Shakspeare was buried in 1616; and in 1708 the first notice of this picture occurs. Where there is such a chasm in evidence, the validity of it may be not unfairly questioned, and especially by those who remember a species of fraudulence recorded in Mr. Foote's *Taste*: "Clap Lord Dupe's arms on that half-length of Erasmus; I have sold it him as his great grandfather's third brother, for fifty guineas."

he has found it, a circumstance which, as far as it affects his own content, will answer, for a while, the same purpose. Thus the late Mr. Jennens of Gopsal in Leicestershire, for many years congratulated himself as owner of another genuine portrait of Shakspeare, and by Cornelius Jansen; nor was disposed to forgive the writer who observed that, being dated in 1610, it could not have been the work of an artist who never saw England till 1618, above a year after our author's death.

So ready, however, are interested people in assisting credulous ones to impose on themselves, that we will venture to predict,—if some opulent dupe to the flimsy artifice of Chatterton, should advertise a considerable sum of money for a portrait of the Pseudo-Rowley, such a desideratum would soon emerge from the tutelary crypts of St. Mary Redcliff at Bristol, or a hitherto unheard of repository in the tomb of Syr Thybbot Gorges at Wraxal.* It would also come attested as a

* A kindred trick had actually been passed off by Chatterton on the late Mr. Barrett of Bristol, in whose back parlour was a pretended head of Canynge, most contemptibly scratched with a pen on a small square piece of yellow parchment, and framed and glazed as an authentic icon by the "curious poyntil" of Rowley. But this same drawing very soon ceased to be stationary, was alternately exhibited and concealed, as the wavering faith of its possessor shifted about, and was prudently withheld at last from the publick eye. Why it was not inserted in the late History of Bristol, as well as Rowley's plan and elevation of its ancient castle, (which all the rules of all the ages of architecture pronounce to be spurious) let the Rowleian advocates inform us. We are happy at least to have recollected a single imposition that was too

strong likeness of our archaeological bard, on the faith of a parchment exhibiting the hand and seal of the *dygne Mayster Wyllyam Canynge*, setting forth that *Mayster Thomas Rowlie* was so *entyrely and passynge wele belovyd* of himself, or our poetick knight, that one or the other *causyd* bys *semblaunce to be ryght conynglye depeyncten on a merveillouse fayre table of wood, and ensevelyd wyth hym, that detb mote theym not clene departyn and putte asunder*.—A similar imposition, however, would in vain be attempted on the editors of Shakspeare, who, with all the zeal of Rowleians, are happily exempt from their credulity.

A former plate of our author, which was copied from Martin Droeshout's in the title-page to the folio 1623, is worn out; nor does so "abominable an imitation of humanity" deserve to be restored. The smaller head, prefixed to the Poems in 1640,* is merely a reduced and reversed copy by Marshall from its predecessor, with a few slight changes in attitude and dress.—We boast therefore of no exterior ornaments,† except those of

gross for even these gentlemen to swallow.—Mr. Barrett, however, in the year 1776 assured Mr. Tyrwhitt and Mr. Steevens, that he received the aforesaid scrawl of Canynge from Chatterton, who described it as having been found in the prolifick chest secured by six, or six-and-twenty keys, no matter which.

* See Vol. I. p. 31.

† They who wish for decorations adapted to this edition of Shakspeare, will find them in Silvester Harding's Portraits and Views, &c. &c. (appropriated to the whole suite of our author's Historical Dramas, &c.) published in thirty numbers.

better print and paper than have hitherto been allotted to any octavo edition of Shakspeare.

Justice nevertheless requires us to subjoin, that had an undoubted picture of our author been attainable, the Booksellers would most readily have paid for the best engraving from it that could have been produced by the most skilful of our modern artists; but it is idle to be at the charge of perpetuating illusions: and who shall offer to point out, among the numerous prints of Shakspeare, any one that is more like him than the rest?

The play of *Pericles* has been added to this collection, by the advice of Dr. Farmer. To make room for it *Titus Andronicus* might have been omitted; but our proprietors are of opinion that some ancient prejudices in its favour may still exist, and for that reason only it is preserved.

We have not reprinted the Sonnets, &c. of Shakspeare, because the strongest act of Parliament that could be framed, would fail to compel readers into their service; notwithstanding these miscellaneous Poems have derived every possible advantage from the literature and judgement of their only intelligent editor, Mr. Malone, whose implements of criticism, like the ivory rake and golden spade in Prudentius, are on this occasion disgraced by the objects of their culture.—Had Shakspeare produced no other works than these, his name would have reached us with as little

celebrity as time has conferred on that of Thomas Watson, an older and much more elegant sonneteer.*

What remains to be added concerning this republication is, that a considerable number of fresh remarks are both adopted and supplied by the present editors. They have persisted in their former track of reading for the illustration of their author, and cannot help observing that those who receive the benefit of explanatory extracts from ancient writers, little know at what expence of time and labour such atoms of intelligence have been collected.—That the foregoing information, however, may communicate no alarm, or induce the reader to suppose we have “bestowed our whole tediousness” on him, we should add, that many notes have likewise been withdrawn. A few, manifestly erroneous, are indeed retained, to show how much the tone of Shakspearian criticism is changed, or on account of the skill displayed in their confutation; for surely every editor in his

* His sonnets, though printed without date, were entered in the year 1581 on the books of the Stationers' Company, under the title of “Watson's Passions, manifesting the true frenzy of love.”

Shakspeare appears to have been among the number of his readers, having in the following passage of *Venus and Adonis*,—

“Leading him prisoner in a red-rose chain”
borrowed an idea from his 83d Sonnet:

“The Muses not long since intrapping love

“In chaines of roases,” &c.

Watson, however, declares on this occasion that he imitated Ronsard; and it must be confessed, with equal truth, that in the present instance Ronsard had been a borrower from Anacreon.

turn is occasionally entitled to be seen, as he would have shown himself, with his vanquished adversary at his feet. We have therefore been sometimes willing to "bring a corollary, rather than want a spirit." Nor, to confess the truth, did we always think it justifiable to shrink our predecessors to pigmies, that we ourselves, by force of comparison, might assume the bulk of giants.

The present editors must also acknowledge, that unless in particular instances, where the voice of the publick had decided against the remarks of Dr. Johnson, they have hesitated to displace them; and had rather be charged with superstitious reverence for his name, than censured for a presumptuous disregard of his opinions.

As a large proportion of Mr. Monck Mason's strictures on a former edition of Shakspeare are here inserted, it has been thought necessary that as much of his Preface* as was designed to introduce them, should accompany their second appearance. Any formal recommendation of them is needless, as their own merit is sure to rank their author among the most diligent and sagacious of our celebrated Poet's annotators.

It may be proper, indeed, to observe that a few of these remarks are omitted because they had been anticipated; and that a few others have excluded themselves by their own immoderate length; for he who publishes a series of comments

* See p. 342.

unattended by the text of his author, is apt to "overflow the measure" allotted to marginal criticism. In these cases, either the commentator or the poet must give way, and no reader will patiently endure to see "Alcides beaten by his page."—*Inferior volat umbra deo.*—Mr. M. Mason will also forgive us if we add, that a small number of his proposed amendments are suppressed through honest commiseration. "'Tis much he dares, and he has a wisdom that often guides his valour to act in safety;" yet occasionally he forgets the prudence that should attend conjecture, and therefore, in a few instances, would have been produced only to be persecuted.—May it be subjoined, that the freedom with which the same gentleman has treated the notes of others, seems to have authorized an equal degree of licence respecting his own? And yet, though the sword may have been drawn against him, he shall not complain that its point is "unbated and envenomed;" for the conductors of this undertaking do not scruple thus openly to express their wishes that it may have merit enough to provoke a revision from the acknowledged learning and perspicacity of their Hibernian coadjutor.—Every re-impression of our great dramatick master's works must be considered in some degree as experimental; for their corruptions and obscurities are still so numerous, and the progress of fortunate conjecture so tardy and uncertain, that our remote

descendants may be perplexed by passages that have perplexed us; and the readings which have hitherto disunited the opinions of the learned, may continue to disunite them as long as England and Shakspeare have a name. In short, the peculiarity once ascribed to the poetick isle of Delos, may be exemplified in our author's text, which on account of readings alternately received and reprobated, must remain in an unsettled state, and float in obedience to every gale of contradictory criticism.—Could a perfect and decisive edition of the following scenes be produced, it were to be expected only (though we fear in vain) from the hand of Dr. Farmer, whose more serious avocations forbid him to undertake what every reader would delight to possess.

But as we are often reminded by our “brethren of the craft,” that this or that emendation, however apparently necessary, is not the *genuine text of Shakspeare*, it might be imagined that we had received this text from its fountain head, and were therefore certain of its purity. Whereas few literary occurrences are better understood, than that it came down to us discoloured by “the variation of every soil” through which it had flowed, and that it stagnated at last in the muddy reservoir of the first folio.* In plainer terms, that the vitia-

* It will perhaps be urged, that to this first folio we are indebted for the only copies of sixteen or seventeen of our author's plays. True:

tions of a careless theatre were seconded by those of as ignorant a press. The integrity of dramas thus prepared for the world, is just on a level with the innocence of females nursed in a camp and educated in a bagnio.—As often therefore as we are told, that by admitting corrections warranted by common sense and the laws of metre, we have not rigidly adhered to the text of Shakspeare, we shall entreat our opponents to exchange that phrase for another “more germane,” and say instead of it, that we have deviated from the text of the publishers of single plays in quarto, or their successors, the editors of the first folio; that we have sometimes followed the suggestions of a Warburton, a Johnson, a Farmer, or a Tyrwhitt, in preference to the decisions of a Hemings or a Condell, notwithstanding their choice of readings might have been influenced by associates whose high-sounding names cannot fail to enforce respect,

but may not our want of yet earlier and less corrupted editions of these very dramas be solely attributed to the monopolizing vigilance of its editors, Messieurs Hemings and Condell? Finding they had been deprived of some tragedies and comedies which, when opportunity offered, they designed to publish for their own emolument, they redoubled their solicitude to withhold the rest, and were but too successful in their precaution. “Thank fortune (says the original putter-forth of *Troilus and Cressida*) for the scape it hath made amongst you; since by the *grand possessors*’ wills, I believe, you should have pray’d for it rather than beene pray’d.”—Had quartos of *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *All’s well that ends well*, &c. been sent into the world, from how many corruptions might the text of all these dramas have been secured!

viz. William Ostler, John Shanke, William Sly, and Thomas Poope.*

To revive the anomalies, barbarisms and blunders of some ancient copies, in preference to the corrections of others almost equally old, is likewise a circumstance by no means honourable to our author, however secure respecting ourselves. For what is it, under pretence of restoration, but to use him as he has used the Tinker in the *Taming of a Shrew*,—to re-clothe him in his pristine rags? To assemble parallels in support of all these deformities, is no insuperable labour; for if we are permitted to avail ourselves of every typographical mistake, and every provincial vulgarism and offence against established grammar, that may be met with in the coëval productions of irregular humourists and ignorant sectaries and buffoons, we may aver that every casual combination of syllables may be tortured into meaning, and every species of corruption exemplified by corresponding depravities of language; but not of such language as Shakspeare, if compared with himself where he is perfect, can be supposed to have written. By similar reference it is that the style of many an ancient building has been characteristically restored. The members of architecture left entire, have instructed the renovator how to supply the loss of such as had fallen into decay. The poet, therefore, whose dialogue has often,

* See first Folio, &c. for the List of Actors in our author's Plays.

during a long and uninterrupted series of lines, no other peculiarities than were common to the works of his most celebrated contemporaries, and whose general ease and sweetness of versification are hitherto unrivalled, ought not so often to be suspected of having produced ungrammatical nonsense, and such rough and defective numbers as would disgrace a village school-boy in his first attempts at English poetry.—It may also be observed, that our author's earliest compositions, his Sonnets, &c. are wholly free from metrical imperfections.

The truth is, that from one extreme we have reached another. Our incautious predecessors, Rowe, Pope, Hanmer, and Warburton, were sometimes justly blamed for wanton and needless deviations from ancient copies; and we are afraid that censure will as equitably fall on some of us, for a revival of irregularities which have no reasonable sanction, and few champions but such as are excited by a fruitless ambition to defend certain posts and passes that had been supposed untenable. The "wine of collation," indeed, had long been "drawn," and little beside the "mere lees was left" for very modern editors "to brag of." It should therefore be remembered, that as judgement, without the aid of collation, might have insufficient materials to work on, so collation, divested of judgement, will be often worse than thrown away, because it in-

roduces obscurity instead of light. To render Shakspeare less intelligible by a recall of corrupt phraseology, is not, in our opinion, the surest way to extend his fame and multiply his readers; unless (like Curll the bookseller, when the Jews spoke Hebrew to him,) they happen to have most faith in what they least understand. Respecting our author therefore, on some occasions, we cannot join in the prayer of Cordelia:—

“ ————— *Restoration hang*

“ Thy medicine on his lips!”

It is unlucky for him, perhaps, that between the interest of his readers and his editors a material difference should subsist. The former wish to meet with as few difficulties as possible, while the latter are tempted to seek them out, because they afford opportunities for explanatory criticism.

Omissions in our author's works are frequently suspected, and sometimes not without sufficient reason. Yet, in our opinion, they have suffered a more certain injury from interpolation; for almost as often as their measure is deranged, or redundant, some words, alike unnecessary to sense and the grammar of the age, may be discovered, and in a thousand instances, might be expunged, without loss of a single idea meant to be expressed; a liberty which we have sometimes taken, though not (as it is hoped) without constant notice of it to the reader. Enough of this, however, has been already attempted, to show that

more, on the same plan, might be done with safety.* — So far from understanding the power of an ellipsis, we may venture to affirm that the very name of this figure in rhetorick never reached the ears of our ancient editors. Having on this subject the support of Dr. Farmer's acknowledged judgement and experience, we shall not shrink from controversy with those who maintain a different opinion, and refuse to acquiesce in modern suggestions if opposed to the authority of quartos and folios, consigned to us by a set of people who were wholly uninstructed in the common forms of style, orthography and punctuation.— We do not therefore hesitate to affirm, that a blind fidelity to the eldest printed copies, is on some occasions a confirmed treason against the sense, spirit, and versification of Shakspeare.

All these circumstances considered, it is time, instead of a timid and servile adherence to ancient copies, when (offending against sense and metre) they furnish no real help, that a future editor, well acquainted with the phraseology of our author's age, should be at liberty to restore some apparent meaning to his corrupted lines, and a decent flow to his obstructed versification.

* Sufficient instances of measure thus rendered defective, and in the present edition unamended, may be found in the three last acts of *Hamlet*, and in *Othello*. The length of this prefatory advertisement has precluded their exemplification, which was here meant to have been given.—We wish, however, to impress the foregoing circumstance on the memory of the judicious reader.

The latter (as already has been observed) may be frequently effected by the expulsion of useless and supernumerary syllables, and an occasional supply of such as might fortuitously have been omitted, notwithstanding the declaration of Hemings and Condell, whose fraudulent preface asserts that they have published our author's plays "as absolute in their numbers as he conceived them." Till somewhat resembling the process above suggested, be authorized, the publick will ask in vain for a commodious and pleasant text of Shakspeare. Nothing will be lost to the world on account of the measure recommended, there being folios and quartos enough remaining for the use of antiquarian or critical travellers, to whom a jolt over a rugged pavement may be more delectable than an easy passage over a smooth one, though they both conduct to the same object.

To a reader unacquainted with the licenses of a theatre, the charge of more material interpolation than that of mere syllables, will appear to want support; and yet whole lines and passages in the following plays incur a very just suspicion of having originated from this practice, which continues even in the present improved state of our dramatique arrangements; for the propensity of modern performers to alter words, and occasionally introduce ideas incongruous with their author's plan, will not always escape detection. In such vagaries our comedians have been much

too frequently indulged; but to the injudicious tragical interpolator no degree of favour should be shown, not even to a late Matilda, who, in Mr. Home's *Douglas* thought fit to change the obscure intimation with which her part should have concluded—

“~~—~~ such a son,

“And such a husband, *make a woman bold.*—

into a plain avowal, that

“~~—~~ such a son,

“And such a husband, *drive me to my fate.*”

Here we perceive that Fate, the old post-horse of tragedy, has been saddled to expedite intelligence which was meant to be delayed till the necessary moment of its disclosure. Nay, further: the prompter's book being thus corrupted, on the first night of the revival of this beautiful and interesting play at Drury-lane, the same spurious nonsense was heard from the lips of Mrs. Siddons, lips, whose matchless powers should be sacred only to the task of animating the purest strains of dramatick poetry.—Many other instances of the same presumption might have been subjoined, had they not been withheld through tenderness to performers now upon the stage.—Similar interpolations, however, in the text of Shakspeare, can only be suspected, and therefore must remain unexpelled.

To other defects of our late editions may be subjoined, as not the least notorious, an exube-

rance of comment. Our situation has not unaptly resembled that of the fray in the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet*:

“While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,
“Came more and more, and fought on part and part:”

till, as Hamlet has observed, we are contending

“_____ for a plot

“Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause.”

Indulgence to the remarks of others, as well as partiality to our own; an ambition in each little Hercules to set up pillars, ascertaining how far he had travelled through the dreary wilds of black letter; and perhaps a reluctance or inability to decide between contradictory sentiments, have also occasioned the appearance of more annotations than were absolutely wanted, unless it be thought requisite that our author, like a Dauphin Classick, should be reduced to marginal prose for the use of children; that all his various readings (assembled by Mr. Capell) should be enumerated, the genealogies of all his real personages deduced; and that as many of his plays as are founded on Roman or British history, should be attended by complete transcripts from their originals in Sir Thomas North's *Plutarch*, or the Chronicles of Hall and Holinshed.—These faults, indeed,—*si quid prodest delicta fateri*,—within half a century, (when the present race of voluminous criticks is extinct) cannot fail to be remedied by a judicious and frugal selection from the labours of us all.

Nor is such an event to be deprecated even by ourselves; since we may be certain that some ivy of each individual's growth will still adhere to the parent oak, though not enough, as at present, to "hide the princely trunk, and suck the verdure out of it."*—It may be feared too, should we persist in similar accumulations of extraneous matter, that our readers will at length be frightened away from Shakspeare, as the soldiers of Cato deserted their comrade when he became bloated with poison—*crescens fugere cadaver*. It is our opinion, in short, that every one who opens the page of an ancient English writer, should bring with him some knowledge; and yet he by whom a thousand minutiae remain to be learned, needs not to close our author's volume in despair, for his spirit and general drift are always obvious, though his language and allusions are occasionally obscure.

We may subjoin (alluding to our own practice as well as that of others) that they whose remarks are longest, and who seek the most frequent opportunities of introducing their names at the bottom of our author's page, are not, on that account, the most estimable criticks. The art of writing notes, as Dr. Johnson has pleasantly observed in his preface, p. 235,† is not of difficult attainment. Additional hundreds might therefore be supplied; for as often as a various reading, whether service-

* *Tempest*.

† See also Addison's *Spectator*, No. 470.

able or not, is to be found, the discoverer can bestow an immediate reward on his own industry, by a display of his favourite signature. The same advantage may be gained by opportunities of appropriating to ourselves what was originally said by another person, and in another place.

Though our adoptions have been slightly mentioned already, our fourth impression of the Plays of Shakspeare must not issue into the world without particular and ample acknowledgements of the benefit it has derived from the labours of the last editor, whose attention, diligence, and spirit of enquiry, have very far exceeded those of the whole united phalanx of his predecessors.—His additions to our author's Life, his attempt to ascertain the Order in which his plays were written, together with his account of our ancient Stage, &c. are here re-published; and every reader will concur in wishing that a gentleman who has produced such intelligent combinations from very few materials, had fortunately been possessed of more.

Of his notes on particular passages a great majority is here adopted. True it is, that on some points we fundamentally disagree; for instance, concerning his metamorphosis of monosyllables (like *burn*, *sworn*, *worn*, *here* and *there*, *arms* and *charms*,) into dissyllables; his contraction of dissyllables (like *neither*, *rather*, *reason*, *lover*, &c.) into monosyllables; and his sentiments respecting

the worth of the variations supplied by the second folio.—On the first of these contested matters we commit ourselves to the publick ear; on the second we must awhile solicit the reader's attention.

The following conjectural account of the publication of this second folio (about which no certainty can be obtained) perhaps is not very remote from truth.

When the predecessor of it appeared, some intelligent friend or admirer of Shakspeare might have observed its defects, and corrected many of them in its margin, from early manuscripts,* or authentick information.

That such manuscripts should have remained, can excite no surprize. The good fortune that, till this present hour, has preserved the *Chester and Coventry Mysteries*, *Tancred and Gismund*† as originally written, the ancient play of *Timon*, the *Witch* of Middleton, with several older as well as coëval dramas (exclusive of those in the Marquis of Lansdowne's library) might surely have befriended some of our author's copies in 1632, only sixteen years after his death.

That oral information concerning his works was still accessible, may with similar probability be inferred; as some of the original and most

* See Mr. Holt White's note on *Romeo and Juliet*, Vol. XIV. p. 413. n. 6.

† i. e. as acted before Queen Elizabeth in 1568. See Warton, Vol. III. p. 376, n. g.

knowing performers in his different pieces were then alive (Lowin and Taylor, for instance); and it must be certain, that on the stage they never uttered such mutilated lines and unintelligible nonsense as was afterwards incorporated with their respective parts, in both the first quarto and folio editions.

The folio therefore of 1623, corrected from one or both the authorities above mentioned, we conceive to have been the basis of its successor in 1632.

At the same time, however, a fresh and abundant series of errors and omissions was created in the text of our author; the natural and certain consequence of every re-impression of a work which is not overseen by other eyes than those of its printer.

Nor is it at all improbable that the person who furnished the revision of the first folio, wrote a very obscure hand, and was much cramped for room, as the margin of this book is always narrow. Such being the case, he might often have been compelled to deal in abbreviations, which were sometimes imperfectly deciphered, and sometimes wholly misunderstood.

Mr. Malone, indeed, frequently points his artillery at a personage whom we cannot help regarding as a phantom; we mean the *Editor* of the second folio; for perhaps no such literary agent as an editor of a poetical work unaccompa-

nied by comments, was at that period to be found. This office, if any where, was vested in the printer, who transferred it to his compositors; and these worthies discharged their part of the trust with a proportionate mixture of ignorance and inattention. We do not wish to soften our expression; for some plays, like *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, and many books of superior consequence, like *Fox's Martyrs* and the *Chronicles of Holinsbed*, &c. were carefully prepared for the publick eye by their immediate authors, or substitutes qualified for their undertaking. But about the year 1600, the era of total incorrectness commenced, and works of almost all kinds appeared with the disadvantage of more than their natural and inherent imperfections.

Such too, in these more enlightened days, when few compositors are unskilled in orthography and punctuation, would be the event, were complicated works of fancy submitted to no other superintendence than their own. More attentive and judicious artists than were employed on our present edition of Shakspeare, are, I believe, nowhere to be found; and yet had their proofs escaped correction from an editor, the text of our author in many places would have been materially changed. And as all these changes would have originated from attention for a moment relaxed, interrupted memory, a too hasty glance at the page before them, and other incidental causes, they

could not have been recommended in preference to the variations of the second folio, which in several instances have been justly reprobated by the last editor of Shakspeare. What errors then might not have been expected, when compositors were wholly unlettered and careless, and a corrector of the press an officer unknown? To him who is inclined to dispute our grounds for this last assertion, we would recommend a perusal of the errata at the ends of multitudes of our ancient publications, where the reader's indulgence is entreated for "faults escaped on account of the author's distance from the press;" faults, indeed, which could not have occurred, had every printing-office, as at present, been furnished with a regular and literary superintendant of its productions.—How then can it be expected that printers who were often found unequal to the task of setting forth even a plain prose narrative, consisting of a few sheets, without blunders innumerable, should have done justice to a folio volume of dramatick dialogues in metre, which required a so much greater degree of accuracy?

But the worth of our contested volume also seems to be questioned, because the authority on which even such changes in it as are allowed to be judicious, is unknown. But if weight were granted to this argument, what support could be found for ancient Greek and Roman MSS. of various descriptions? The names of their tran-

scribers are alike undiscovered; and yet their authority, when the readings they present are valuable, will seldom fail to be admitted.

Nay, further:—it is on all hands allowed that what we style a younger and inferior MS. will occasionally correct the mistakes and supply the deficiencies of one of better note, and higher antiquity. Why, therefore, should not a book printed in 1632 be allowed the merit of equal services to a predecessor in 1623?

Such also, let us add, were the sentiments of a gentleman whose name we cannot repeat without a sigh, which those who were acquainted with his value, will not suspect of insincerity: we mean our late excellent friend, Mr. Tyrwhitt. In his library was this second folio of our author's plays. He always stood forward as a determined advocate for its authority, on which, we believe, more than one of his emendations were formed. At least, we are certain that he never attempted any, before he had consulted it.

He was once, indeed, offered a large fragment of the first folio; but in a few days he returned it, with an assurance that he did not perceive any decided superiority it could boast over its immediate successor, as the metre, imperfect in the elder, was often restored to regularity in the junior impression.

Mr. Malone, however, in his *Letter to Dr. Farmer*, has styled these necessary corrections

such "as could not escape a person of the most ordinary capacity, who had been one month conversant with a printing-house;" a description mortifying enough to the present editors, who, after an acquaintance of many years with typographical mysteries, would be loath to weigh their own amendments against those which this second folio, with all its blunders, has displayed.

The same gentleman also (see his Preface, p. 410) speaks with some confidence of having *proved* his assertions relative to the worthlessness of this book. But how are these assertions proved? By exposing its errors (some of which nevertheless are of a very questionable shape) and by observing a careful silence about its deserts.* The latter surely should have been stated as well as the former. Otherwise, this proof will resemble the "ill-roasted egg" in *As you like it*, which was done only "on one side."—If, in the mean time, some critical arithmetician can be found, who will impartially and intelligently ascertain by way of D^r and C^r the faults and merits of this book, and thereby prove the former to have been many, and the latter scarce any at all, we will most openly acknowledge our misapprehension, and subscribe (a circumstance of which we need not be ashamed)

* Thus (as one instance out of several that might be produced) when Mr. Malone, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, very judiciously restores the uncommon word—*ging*, and supports it by instances from *The New Inn* and *The Alchemist*, he forbears to mention that such also is the reading of the *second*, though *not* of the *first* folio. See Vol. III. p. 450, m. 7.

to the superior sagacity and judgement of Mr. Malone.

To conclude, though we are far from asserting that this republication, generally considered, is preferable to its original, we must still regard it as a valuable supplement to that work; and no stronger plea in its favour can be advanced, than the frequent use made of it by Mr. Malone. The numerous corrections from it admitted by that gentleman into his text,* and pointed out in his

* Amounting to (as we are informed by a very accurate compositor who undertook to count them) 186.

Instances wherein Mr. Malone has admitted the Corrections of the
Second Folio.

<i>Tempest</i>	—	—	—	—	—	4
<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	—	—	—	—	—	10
<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	—	—	—	—	—	5
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	—	—	—	—	—	15
<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	—	—	—	—	—	11
<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>	—	—	—	—	—	0
<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	—	—	—	—	—	13
<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	—	—	—	—	—	4
<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	—	—	—	—	—	2
<i>As you like it</i>	—	—	—	—	—	15
<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	—	—	—	—	—	16
<i>All's well that ends well</i>	—	—	—	—	—	6
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Winter's Tale</i>	—	—	—	—	—	8
<i>Macbeth</i>	—	—	—	—	—	6
<i>King John</i>	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>King Richard II.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	1
<i>King Henry IV. Part I.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	1
<i>— II.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	1
<i>King Henry V.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	7
<i>King Henry VI. Part I.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	6
<i>— II.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	6

notes, will, in our judgement, contribute to its eulogium; at least cannot fail to rescue it from his prefatory imputations of—"being of no value whatever," and afterwards of—"not being worth—three shillings.*" See this Vol. p. 368, and p. 450. n. 5.

Our readers, it is hoped, will so far honour us as to observe, that the foregoing opinions were not suggested and defended through an ambitious spirit of contradiction. Mr. Malone's Preface, indeed, p. 366, will absolve us from that censure; for he allows them to be of a date previous to his own edition. He, therefore, on this subject, is the assailant, and not the conductors of the present republication.

<i>King Henry VI. Part III.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	8
<i>King Richard III.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	0
<i>King Henry VIII.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	6
<i>Coriolanus</i>	—	—	—	—	—	0
<i>Julius Cæsar</i>	—	—	—	—	—	2
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	—	—	—	—	—	7
<i>Timon of Athens</i>	—	—	—	—	—	6
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	—	—	—	—	—	0
<i>Cymbeline</i>	—	—	—	—	—	10
<i>King Lear</i>	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	—	—	—	—	—	4
<i>Hamlet</i>	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Othello</i>	—	—	—	—	—	0
<i>Total</i>						186

PLYMSELL.

* This doctrine, however, appears to have made few proselytes: at least, some late catalogues of our good friends the booksellers, have expressed their dissent from it in terms of uncommon force.

But though, in the course of succeeding strictures, several other of Mr. Malone's positions may be likewise controverted, some with seriousness, and some with levity, (for our discussions are not of quite so solemn a turn as those which involve the interests of our country,) we feel an undissembled pleasure in avowing that his remarks are at once so numerous and correct, that when criticism "has done its worst," their merit but in a small degree can be affected. We are confident, however, that he himself will hereafter join with us in considering no small proportion of our contested readings as a mere game at literary push-pin; and that if Shakspeare looks down upon our petty squabbles over his mangled scenes, it must be with feelings similar to those of Lucan's hero,

— *ridetque sui ludibria trunci.*

In the Preface of Mr. Malone, indeed, a direct censure has been levelled at incorrectness in the text of the edition 1778. The justice of the imputation is unequivocally allowed; but, at the same time, might not this acknowledgement be seconded by somewhat like a retort? for is it certain that the collations, &c. of 1790 are wholly secure from similar charges? Are they accompanied by no unauthorized readings, no omission of words, and transpositions? Through all the plays, and especially those of which there is only a single copy, they have been with some diligence retraced, and

the frailties of their collator, such as they are, have been ascertained. They shall not, however, be ostentatiously pointed out, and for this only reason:—That as they decrease but little, if at all, the vigour of Shakspeare, the critick who in general has performed with accuracy one of the heaviest of literary tasks, ought not to be molested by a display of petty faults, which might have eluded the most vigilant faculties of sight and hearing that were ever placed as spies over the labours of each other. They are not even mentioned here as a covert mode of attack, or as a “note of preparation” for future hostilities. The office of “devising brave punishments” for faithless editors, is therefore strenuously declined, even though their guilt should equal that of one of their number (Mr. Steevens) who stands convicted of having given *winds* instead of *wind*, *stables* instead of *stable*, *sessions* instead of *session*, *sins* instead of *sin*, and (we shudder while we recite the accusation) *my* instead of *mine*.*

“——— such small deer

“Have been our food for many a year;”

so long, in truth, that any further pursuit of them is here renounced, together with all triumphs founded on the detection of harmless synonymous particles that accidentally may have deserted their proper places and wandered into others, without injury to Shakspeare.—A few chipped or dis-

* See Mr. Malone's Preface, p. 392, *et seq.*

jointed stones will not impair the shape or endanger the stability of a pyramid. We are far from wishing to depreciate exactness, yet cannot persuade ourselves but that a single lucky conjecture or illustration, should outweigh a thousand spurious *batbs* deposed in favour of legitimate *bas's*, and the like insignificant recoveries, which may not too degradingly be termed—the haberdasheries of criticism; that “stand in number, though in reckoning none;” and are as unimportant to the Poet’s fame,

“As is the morn-dew on the myrtle-leaf

“To his grand sea.”

We shall venture also to assert, that, on a minute scrutiny, every editor, in his turn, may be charged with omission of some preferable reading; so that he who drags his predecessor to justice on this score, will have good luck if he escapes ungalled by recrimination.

If somewhat, therefore, in the succeeding volumes has been added to the correction and illustration of our author, the purpose of his present editors is completely answered. On any thing like perfection in their labours they do not presume, being too well convinced that, in defiance of their best efforts, their own incapacity, and that of the original quarto and folio-mongers, have still left sufficient work for a race of commentators who are yet unborn.

Be it remembered also, that the assistants and

adversaries of editors, enjoy one material advantage over editors themselves. They are at liberty to select their objects of remark ;

et quæ

Desperant tractata nitescere posse, relinquunt.

The fate of the editor in form is less propitious. He is expected to combat every difficulty from which his auxiliaries and opponents could secure an honourable retreat. It should not therefore be wondered at, if some of his enterprizes are unsuccessful.

Though the foregoing Advertisement has run out into an unpremeditated length, one circumstance remains to be mentioned.—The form and substance of the commentary attending this republication having been materially changed and enlarged since it first appeared, in compliance with ungrateful custom, the name of its original editor might have been withdrawn: but Mr. *Steevens* could not prevail on himself to forego an additional opportunity of recording in a title-page that he had once the honour of being united in a task of literature with Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON. This is a distinction which malevolence cannot obscure, nor flattery transfer to any other candidate for publick favour.

It may possibly be expected, that a list of Errata should attend so voluminous a work as this, or that cancels should apologize for its more material inaccuracies. Neither of these measures, however, has in the present instance been adopted, and for reasons now submitted to the publick.

In regard to errata, it has been customary with not a few authors to acknowledge small mistakes, that they might escape the suspicion of greater,* or perhaps to intimate that no greater could be detected. Both little and great (and doubtless there may be the usual proportion of both) are here exposed (with very few exceptions) to the candour and perspicacity of the reader, who needs not to be told that in fifteen volumes octavo of intricate and variegated printing, gone through in the space of about twenty months, the most vigilant eyes must occasionally have been overwatched, and the readiest knowledge intercepted. The sight of the editors, indeed, was too much fatigued to encourage their engagement in so laborious a revision; and they are likewise convinced that substitutes are not always qualified for their task; but instead of pointing out real mistakes, would have supposed the existence of such as were

* “ ————— the hospitable door

“ Expos’d a matron, to avoid worse rape.”

Paradise Lost, B. I. v. 504.

merely founded on their own want of acquaintance with the peculiarities of ancient spelling and language; for even modern poetry has sometimes been in danger from the chances of their superintendence. He whose business it is to offer this unusual apology, very well remembers to have been sitting with Dr. Johnson, when an agent from a neighbouring press brought in the proof sheet of a republication, requesting to know whether a particular word in it was not corrupted. "So far from it, Sir, (replied the Doctor, with some harshness,) that the word you suspect and would displace, is conspicuously beautiful where it stands, and is the only one that could have done the duty expected from it by Mr. Pope."

As for cancels, it is in the power of every careless binder to defeat their purpose; for they are so seldom lodged with uniformity in their proper places, that they as often serve to render copies imperfect, as to screen an author from the charge of ignorance or inattention. The leaf appropriated to one volume, is sometimes shuffled into the corresponding page of another; and sometimes the faulty leaf is withdrawn, and no other substituted in its room. These circumstances might be exemplified; but the subject is scarcely of consequence enough to be more than generally stated to the reader, whose indulgence is again solicited on account of blemishes which in the course of an undertaking like this are un-

avoidable, and could not, at its conclusion, have been remedied but by the hazard of more extensive mischief;—an indulgence, indeed, that will more readily be granted, and especially for the sake of the compositors, when it is understood, that, on an average, every page of the present work, including spaces, quadrats, points and letters, is (to speak technically) composed of 2680 distinct pieces of metal.*

As was formerly therefore observed, he who waited till the river should run dry, did not act with less reason than the editors would do, who should suspend a voluminous and complicated publication, in the vain hope of rendering it absolutely free from literary and typographical errors.

* Number of letters, &c. in a page of Shakspeare, 1793.

TEXT.	NOTES.
The average number in each line (including letters, points, spaces, &c.) is 47; the number of lines in a page—37.	The average number in each line (including letters, points, spaces, &c.) is 67; the number of lines in a page—47
47	67
37	47
329	469
141	268
1739 in a page.	3149 in a page.

From this calculation it is clear, that a common page, admitting it to consist of 1-3d text, and 2-3ds notes, contains about 2680 distinct pieces of metal; which multiplied by 16, the number of pages in a sheet, will amount to 42,880—the misplacing of any one of which would inevitably cause a blunder. PLYMSZLL.

ADDENDA, &c.

Tempest, Vol. III. p. 7. n. 9.

—bring her to *try with main course*.]

This phrase occurs also in Smith's *Sea-Grammar*, 1627, 4°, under the article *How to handle a ship in a storme*. "Let us lie at *Trie with our maine course*; that is, to hale the tacke aboard, the sheat close aft, the boling set up, and the helme tied close aboard." p. 40. STEEVENS.

Tempest, Vol. III. p. 121.

Dele the whole of note 8. *Broom groves* is undoubtedly the true reading, and only wanted proper explanation.

Broom, in this place, signifies the *Spartium scoparium*, of which brooms are frequently made. Near Gamlingay in Cambridgeshire it grows high enough to conceal the tallest cattle as they pass through it; and in places where it is cultivated, still higher: a circumstance that had escaped my notice, till I was told of it by Professor Martin, whose name I am particularly happy to insert among those of other friends who have honoured and improved this work by their various communications. STEEVENS.

Gent. of Verona, Vol. III. p. 184, l. 16, for *Look*, read, *And*.

Ibid. p. 200, l. 12, for *she made*, read, *she hath made*.

Ibid. p. 240, l. 4, for *therefore*, read, *thereof*.

Merry Wives, &c. Vol. III. p. 381, n. 6.

—— up with your *figbts*,] This passage may receive an additional and perhaps a somewhat different illustration from John Smith's *Sea-Grammar*, 4°. 1627. In page 58 he says, "But if you see your chase strip himself into *figbting* sailes, that is, to put out his colours in the poope, his flag in the maine top, his streamers or pendants at the

end of his yards' arms, &c. provide yourself to fight." Again, p. 60. "Thus they use to strip themselves into their short sailes, or *fighting* sailes, which is only the fore sail, the maine and fore top sailes, because the rest should not be fired or spoiled; besides they would be troublesome to handle, hinder our sights and the using our armes: he makes ready his *close fights* fore and aft." In a former passage, p. 58, he has said that "a ship's *close fights* are small ledges of wood laid crosse one another, like the grates of iron in a prison's window, betwixt the maine mast and the fore mast, and are called gratings or nettings," &c.

STEEVENS.

Twelfth Night, Vol. IV. p. 139, n. 8.

Dr. Farmer would read *fat* instead of *tall*, the former of these epithets, in his opinion, being referable to the following words—a *good housekeeper*. STEEVENS.

All's well, &c. Vol. VI. p. 187. Dele n. 4.

I have here been guilty of an oversight. The King of France's disorder is specified as follows in Painter's Translation from Boccaccio's Novel, on which this play was founded: "She heard by report that the French King had a swelling upon his breast, which by reason of ill cure, was grown into a *fistula*," &c.—There was consequently no ground for my former supposition. STEEVENS.

All's well, &c. Vol. VI. p. 275, add to n. 4.

I took this *lark* for a *bunting*.] This is a fine discrimination between the possessor of courage, and him that only has the appearance of it.

The *bunting* is in feather, size, and form, so like the *sky-lark*, as to require nice attention to discover the one from the other; it also ascends and sinks in the air nearly in the same manner: but it has little or no song, which gives estimation to the *sky-lark*. J. JOHNSON.

King Richard II. Vol. VIII. p. 188. To follow Dr. Farmer's note.

Bacon elsewhere glances at the same transaction. "And for your comparison with Richard II. I see you follow the example of them that brought him upon the stage, and into print in Queen Elizabeth's time." *Works.* Vol. IV. p. 278. The partizans of Essex had, therefore, procured the publication as well as the acting of this play.

HOLT WHITE.

King Richard II. Vol. VIII. p. 330. n. 4.

Since the foregoing Note was printed off, I have satisfied myself, that this ballad was written, *not* on the conspiracy against Henry IV. but on the death of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, who was taken and beheaded by the captain of a ship called *Nicholas of the Tower*, in May, 1450, when it appears to have been composed, and is consequently to be regarded as a satire upon the ministers or court party of that time. RITSON.

Troilus and Cressida, Vol. XI. p. 310.

Mr. Vaillant adds to n. 9. that Cotton dedicated his Treatise on Fishing to his father Walton; and that Ashmole in his Diary observes—"April 3. Mr. William Backhouse of Swallowfield in com. Berks, caused me to call him father thenceforward." STEEVENS.

Troilus and Cressida, Vol. XI. p. 388.

My sacred aunt.] It is remarkable that the Greeks give to the uncle the title of Sacred, *ἁγιος*. Patruus avunculus ὁ πρὸς παῖτος ἁγιος, Gaz. de Senec. patruus ὁ πρὸς μητρὸς ἁγιος, avunculus, Budæi Lexic.—*ἁγιος* is also used absolutely for ὁ πρὸς παῖτος ἁγιος, Euripid. Iphigen. Taurid. l. 930.

Ἰφι. "Ἡ πον νοσῶντας ἁγιος ὑβρίσεν δόμους." And Xenoph. Κυρου παιδ. lib. 1. passim. VAILLANT.

This circumstance may tend to establish an opinion I have

elsewhere expressed, that this Play was not the entire composition of Shakspeare, to whom the Grecism before us was probably unknown. STEEVENS.

Romeo and Juliet, Vol. XIV. p. 427.

— proves thee far and wide *a broad* goose.] To afford some meaning to this poor but intended witticism, Dr. Farmer would read—"proves thee far and wide *abroad*, goose." STEEVENS.

Romeo and Juliet, Vol. XIV. p. 541, add to n. 7.

By the Statutes of Trinity College, Cambridge, ch. 22. it is declared—That no batchelor or scholar shall go into the town without a companion as a witness of his honesty, on pain for the first offence to be deprived of a week's commons, with further punishment for the offence if repeated.

REED.

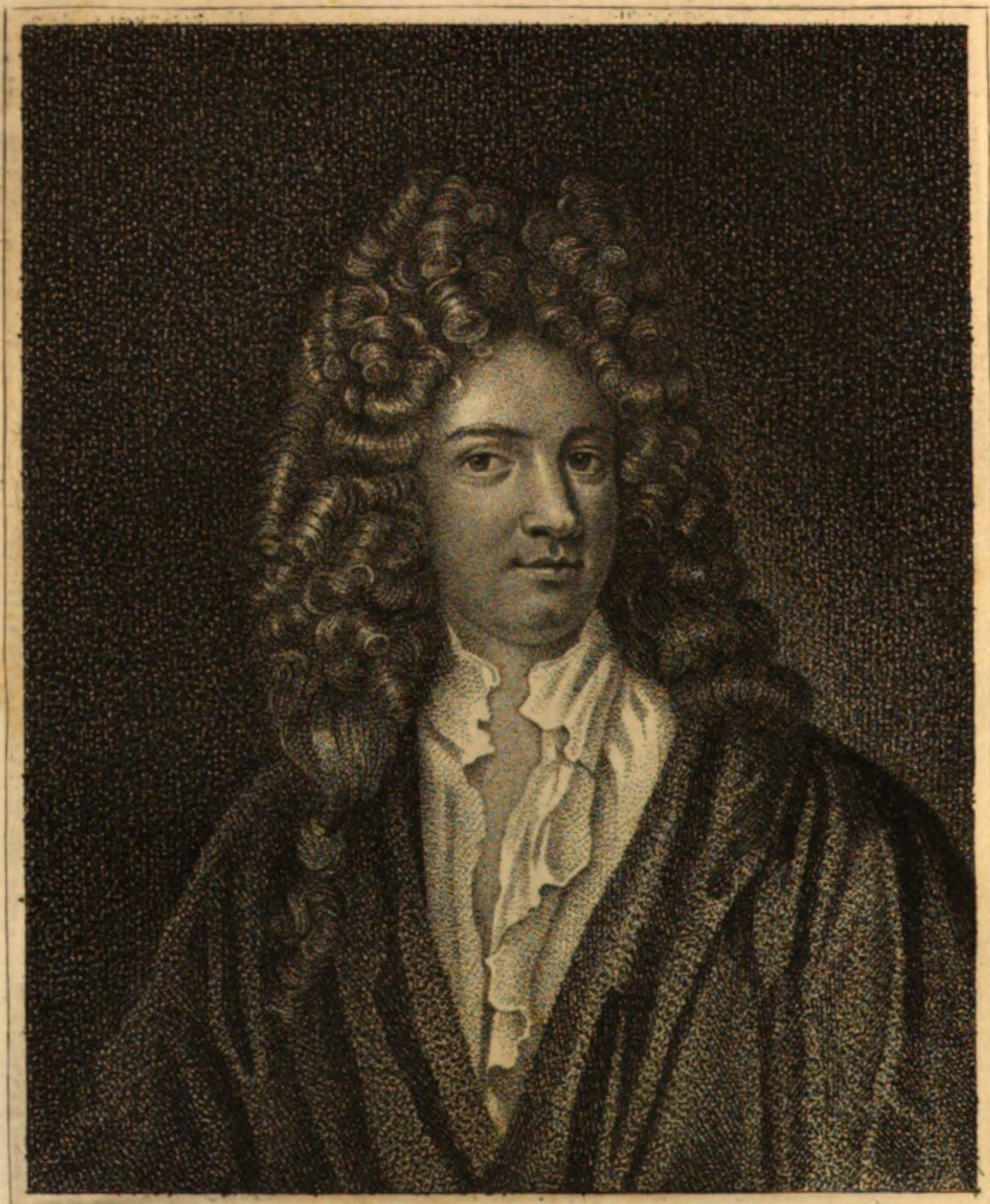
DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.

Shakspeare's House ; to face p. 17, Vol. I.

The fac-simile of Shakspeare's hand-writing, with a label and seal, to face his Mortgage, Vol. I. p. 89.

The fac-simile of the hand-writing of Shakspeare and the witnesses to his will, to face p. 101, Vol. I.

The Morris-dancers to be placed at the end of Vol. VIII.



Nugent Sculp.

NICHOLAS ROWE ESQ, PL.

S O M E
ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE, &c.
O F
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

WRITTEN BY MR. ROWE.

IT seems to be a kind of respect due to the memory of excellent men, especially of those whom their wit and learning have made famous, to deliver some account of themselves, as well as their works, to posterity. For this reason, how fond do we see some people of discovering any little personal story of the great men of antiquity! their families, the common accidents of their lives, and even their shape, make, and features, have been the subject of critical inquiries. How trifling soever this curiosity may seem to be, it is certainly very natural; and we are hardly satisfied with an account of any remarkable person, till we have heard him described even to the very cloaths he wears. As for what relates to men of letters, the knowledge of an author may sometimes conduce to the better understanding his book; and though the works of Mr. Shakspeare may seem to many not to want a comment, yet I fancy some little account of the man himself may not be thought improper to go along with them.

He was the son of Mr. John Shakspeare, and was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, in April 1564. His family, as appears by the register

2 SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE, &c.

and publick writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mentioned as gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool,² had so large a family, ten children

² *His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool,*] It appears that he had been officer and bailiff of Stratford-upon-Avon; and that he enjoyed some hereditary lands and tenements, the reward of his grandfather's faithful and approved services to King Henry VII. See the Extract from the Herald's Office. THEOBALD.

The chief magistrate of the Body Corporate of Stratford, now distinguished by the title of Mayor, was in the early charters called the High Bailiff. This office Mr. John Shakspeare filled in 1569, as appears from the following extracts from the books of the corporation, with which I have been favoured by the Rev. Mr. Davenport, Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon.

"Jan. 10, in the 6th year of the reign of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, John Shakspeare passed his Chamberlain's accounts.

"At the Hall holden the eleventh day of September, in the eleventh year of the reign of our sovereign lady Elizabeth, 1569, were present Mr. John Shakspeare, High Bailiff." [Then follow the names of the Aldermen and Burgeses.]

"At the Hall holden Nov. 19th, in the 21st year of the reign of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, it is ordained, that every Alderman shall be taxed to pay weekly 4d. saving *John Shakspeare* and Robert Bruce, who shall not be taxed to pay any thing; and every burgeses to pay 2d."

"At the Hall holden on the 6th day of September, in the 28th year of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth.

"At this hall William Smith and Richard Courte are chosen to be Aldermen in the places of John Wheler, and John Shakspeare, for that Mr. Wheler doth desire to be put out of the company, and Mr. Shakspeare doth not come to the halls, when they be warned, nor hath not done of long time."

From these extracts it may be collected, (as is observed by the gentleman above-mentioned, to whose obliging attention to my inquiries I am indebted for many particulars relative to our poet's family,) that Mr. John Shakspeare in the former part of his life was in good circumstances, such persons being generally chosen into the corporation; and from his being excused [in 1579] to pay 4d. weekly, and at a subsequent period (1586) put out of the corporation, that he was then reduced in his circumstances.

It appears from a note to W. Dethick's Grant of Arms to him in

in all, that though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free-school,³ where, it is probable, he acquired what Latin he was master of: but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language. It is without controversy, that in his works we scarce find any traces of any thing that looks like an imitation of the ancients. The delicacy of his taste, and the natural bent of his own great genius, (equal, if not superior, to some of the best of theirs,) would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mixed with his own writings; so that his not copying at least something from them, may be an argument of his never having read them. Whether his ignorance of the ancients were a disadvantage to him or no, may admit of a dispute: for though the knowledge of them might have made him more correct, yet it is not improbable but that the re-

1596, now in the College of Arms, *Vincent*, Vol. 157, p. 24, that he was a justice of the peace, and possessed of lands and tenements to the amount of 500l.

Our poet's mother was the daughter and heir of Robert Arden of Wellincote, in the county of Warwick, who, in the Ms. above referred to, is called "a gentleman of worship." The family of *Arden* is a very ancient one; Robert Arden of Bromwich, esq. being in the list of the gentry of this county, returned by the commissioners in the twelfth year of King Henry VI. A.D. 1433. Edward Arden was Sheriff of the county in 1568.—The woodland part of this county was anciently called *Ardern*; afterwards softened to *Arden*. Hence the name. MALONE.

³ *He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free-school,]* The free-school, I presume, founded at Stratford. THEOBALD.

4 SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE, &c.

gularity and deference for them, which would have attended that correctness, might have restrained some of that fire, impetuosity, and even beautiful extravagance, which we admire in Shakspeare: and I believe we are better pleased with those thoughts, altogether new and uncommon, which his own imagination supplied him so abundantly with, than if he had given us the most beautiful passages out of the Greek and Latin poets, and that in the most agreeable manner that it was possible for a master of the English language to deliver them.

Upon his leaving school, he seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him;⁴ and in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young.⁵ His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway,⁶ said to have been

⁴ — *into that way of living which his father proposed to him;*] I believe, that on leaving school Shakspeare was placed in the office of some country attorney, or the seneschal of some manor court. See the *Essay on the order of his plays*, Article, *Hamlet*. MALONE.

⁵ — *he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young.*] It is certain he did so; for by the monument in Stratford church erected to the memory of his daughter, Susanna, the wife of John Hall, gentleman, it appears, that she died on the 2d of July, 1649, aged 66: so that she was born in 1583, when her father could not be full 19 years old. THEOBALD.

Susanna, who was our poet's eldest child, was baptized, May 26, 1583. Shakspeare therefore, having been born in April 1564, was nineteen the month preceding her birth. Mr. Theobald was mistaken in supposing that a *monument* was erected to her in the church of Stratford. There is no memorial there in honour of either our poet's wife or daughter, except flat tomb-stones, by which, however, the time of their respective deaths is ascertained.—His daughter, Susanna, died, not on the *second*, but the *eleventh* of July, 1649. Theobald was led into this error by Dugdale. MALONE.

⁶ *His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway,*] She was eight years older than her husband, and died in 1623, at the age of 67 years. THEOBALD.

a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford. In this kind of settlement he continued for some time, till an extravagance that he was guilty of forced him both out of his country, and that way of living which he had taken up; and though it seemed at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily proved the occasion of exerting one of the greatest *geniuses* that ever was known in dramatick poetry. He had by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company; and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him.⁷ And though

The following is the inscription on her tomb-stone in the church of Stratford:

“ Here lyeth interred the body of ANNE, wife of William Shakespeare, who departed this life the 6th day of August, 1623, being of the age of 67 yeares.”

After this inscription follow six Latin verses, not worth preserving. MALONE.

⁷ — *in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him.*] Mr. William Oldys, (Norroy King at Arms, and well known from the share he had in compiling the *Biographia Britannica*) among the collections which he left for a *Life of Shakspeare*, observes, that “ — there was a very aged gentleman living in the neighbourhood of Stratford, (where he died fifty years since) who had not only heard, from several old people in that town, of Shakspeare’s transgression, but could remember the first stanza of that bitter ballad, which, repeating to one of his acquaintance, he preserved it in writing; and here it is neither better nor worse, but faithfully transcribed from the copy which his relation very courteously communicated to me.”

6 SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE, &c.

this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it

“ A parliemente member, a justice of peace,
 “ At home a poor scare-crowe, at London an asse,
 “ If lowfie is Lucy, as some volke miscalle it,
 “ Then Lucy is lowfie whatever befall it :
 “ He thinks himself greate,
 “ Yet an asse in his state
 “ We allowe by his ears but with asses to mate,
 “ If Lucy is lowfie, as some volke miscalle it,
 “ Sing lowfie Lucy, whatever befall it.”

Contemptible as this performance must now appear, at the time when it was written it might have had sufficient power to irritate a vain, weak, and vindictive magistrate ; especially as it was affixed to several of his park-gates, and consequently published among his neighbours.—It may be remarked likewise, that the jingle on which it turns, occurs in the first scene of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

I may add, that the veracity of the late Mr. Oldys has never yet been impeached ; and it is not very probable that a ballad should be forged, from which an undiscovered wag could derive no triumph over antiquarian credulity. STEEVENS.

According to Mr. Capell, this ballad came originally from Mr. Thomas Jones, who lived at Tarbick, a village in Worcestershire, about 18 miles from Stratford-upon-Avon, and died in 1703, aged upwards of ninety. “ He remembered to have heard from several old people at Stratford the story of Shakspeare’s robbing Sir Thomas Lucy’s park ; and their account of it agreed with Mr. Rowe’s, with this addition, that the ballad written against Sir Thomas Lucy by Shakspeare was stuck upon his park-gate, which exasperated the knight to apply to a lawyer at Warwick to proceed against him. Mr. Jones (it is added) put down in writing the first stanza of this ballad, which was all he remembered of it.” In a note on the transcript with which Mr. Capell was furnished, it is said, that “ the people of those parts pronounce *lowfie* like Lucy.” They do so at this day in Scotland. Mr. Wilkes, grandson of the gentleman to whom Mr. Jones repeated the stanza, appears to have been the person who gave a copy of it to Mr. Oldys, and Mr. Capell.

In a Manuscript *History of the Stage*, full of forgeries and falsehoods of various kinds, written (I suspect by William Chetwood the prompter) some time between April 1727 and October 1730, is

redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London.

It is at this time, and upon this accident, that he is said to have made his first acquaintance in the playhouse. He was received into the company then in being, at first in a very mean rank,⁸ but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguished him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer. His name is printed, as the custom was in those times, amongst those of the other players, before some old plays, but without any particular account of what sort of parts he used to play; and though I have inquired, I could never meet with any further account of

the following passage, to which the reader will give just as much credit as he thinks fit :

“ Here we shall observe, that the learned Mr. Joshua Barnes, late Greek Professor of the University of Cambridge, baiting about forty years ago at an inn in Stratford, and hearing an old woman singing part of the above-said song, such was his respect for Mr. Shakspeare’s genius, that he gave her a new gown for the two following stanzas in it; and, could she have said it all, he would (as he often said in company, when any discourse has casually arose about him) have given her ten guineas :

“ Sir Thomas was too covetous,

“ To covet so much deer,

“ When horns enough upon his head

“ Most plainly did appear.

“ Had not his worship one deer left?

“ What then? He had a wife

“ Took pains enough to find him horns

“ Should last him during life.” MALONE.

⁸ *He was received into the company—at first in a very mean rank;]* There is a stage tradition, that his first office in the theatre was that of *Call-boy*, or prompter’s attendant; whose employment it is to give the performers notice to be ready to enter, as often as the business of the play requires their appearance on the stage.

MALONE.

8 SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE, &c.

him this way, than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*.⁹ I should have been much more pleased, to have learned from certain authority, which was the first play he wrote; ² it would be without doubt a pleasure to any man, curious in things of this kind, to see and know what was the first essay of a fancy like Shakspeare's. Perhaps we are not to look for his beginnings, like those of other authors, among their least perfect writings; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that, for aught I know, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, and had the most fire and strength of imagination in them, were the best.³ I would not be thought by this to mean, that his fancy was so loose and extravagant, as to be independent on the rule and government of judgment; but that what he thought, was commonly so great, so justly and rightly conceived in itself, that it wanted little or no correction, and was immediately approved by an impartial judgment at the first sight. But though the order of time in which the several pieces were written be generally uncertain, yet there are pas-

⁹ ——— *than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own Hamlet.*] See such notices as I have been able to collect on this subject, in the List of old English actors, *post*. MALONE.

² ——— *to have learned from certain authority, which was the first play he wrote;*] The highest date of any I can yet find, is *Romeo and Juliet* in 1597, when the author was 33 years old; and *Richard the Second, and Third*, in the next year, viz. the 34th of his age.

POPE.

Richard II. and III. were both printed in 1597.—On the order of time in which Shakspeare's plays were written, see the Essay in this volume. MALONE.

³ ——— *for aught I know, the performances of his youth—were the best.*] See this notion controverted in *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's plays*. MALONE.

sages in some few of them which seem to fix their dates. So the *Chorus* at the end of the fourth act of *Henry the Fifth*, by a compliment very handsomely turned to the earl of Essex, shows the play to have been written when that lord was general for the queen in Ireland; and his eulogy upon queen Elizabeth, and her successor king James, in the latter end of his *Henry the Eighth*, is a proof of that play's being written after the accession of the latter of those two princes to the crown of England. Whatever the particular times of his writing were, the people of his age, who began to grow wonderfully fond of diversions of this kind, could not but be highly pleased to see a genius arise amongst them of so pleasurable, so rich a vein, and so plentifully capable of furnishing their favourite entertainments. Besides the advantages of his wit, he was in himself a good-natured man, of great sweetness in his manners, and a most agreeable companion; so that it is no wonder, if, with so many good qualities, he made himself acquainted with the best conversations of those times. Queen Elizabeth had several of his plays acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour: it is that maiden princess plainly, whom he intends by

— a fair vestal, throned by the west.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream.

and that whole passage is a compliment very properly brought in, and very handsomely applied to her. She was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff, in *The Two Parts of Henry the Fourth*, that she commanded him to continue it for one play more,⁴ and to show him in love. This

⁴ — she commanded him to continue it for one play more,] This

is said to be the occasion of his writing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. How well she was obeyed, the play itself is an admirable proof. Upon this occasion it may not be improper to observe, that this part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the name of *Oldcastle*:⁵ some of that family being then remaining, the queen was pleased to command him to alter it; upon which he made use of Falstaff. The present offence was indeed avoided; but I do not know whether the author may not have been somewhat to blame in his second choice, since it is certain that Sir John Falstaff, who was a knight of the garter, and a lieutenant-general, was a name of distinguished merit in the wars in France in Henry the Fifth's and Henry the Sixth's times. What grace soever the queen conferred upon him, it was not to her only he owed the fortune which the reputation of his wit made. He had the honour to meet with many great and uncommon marks of favour and friendship from the earl of Southampton,⁶ famous in the histories of that time for his friendship to the unfortunate earl of Essex. It was to that noble

anecdote was first given to the publick by Dennis, in the *Epistle Dedicatory* to his comedy entitled *The Comical Gallant*, 4to. 1702, altered from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. MALONE.

⁵ ——— *this part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the name of Oldcastle;*] See the Epilogue to *Henry the Fourth*. POPE.

In a note subjoined to that epilogue, and more fully in Vol. VIII. p. 370, n. 4, the reader will find this notion overturned, and the origin of this *vulgar error* pointed out. Mr. Rowe was evidently deceived by a passage in Fuller's *Worthies*, misunderstood.

MALONE.

⁶ ——— *from the earl of Southampton,*] Of this amiable nobleman such memoirs as I have been able to collect, may be found in the tenth volume, [i. e. of Mr. Malone's edition] prefixed to the poem of *Venus and Adonis*. MALONE.

lord that he dedicated his poem of *Venus and Adonis*.⁷ There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakspeare's, that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted; that my lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse generosity the present age has shown to French dancers and Italian fingers.

What particular habitude or friendships he contracted with private men, I have not been able to learn, more than that every one, who had a true taste of merit, and could distinguish men, had generally a just value and esteem for him. His exceeding candour and good-nature must certainly have inclined all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit obliged the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him.

His acquaintance with Ben Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good-nature; Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players, in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer, that it would be of no service to their company; when Shakspeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and

⁷ ——— *he dedicated his poem of Venus and Adonis.*] To this nobleman also he dedicated his *Rape of Lucrece*, printed in quarto in 1594. MALONE.

found something so well in it, as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the publick.^s

^s ——— to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the publick.] In Mr. Rowe's first edition, after these words was inserted the following passage:

"After this, they were professed friends; though I do not know whether the other ever made him an equal return of gentleness and sincerity. Ben was naturally proud and insolent, and in the days of his reputation did so far take upon him the supremacy in wit, that he could not but look with an evil eye upon any one that seemed to stand in competition with him. And if at times he has affected to commend him, it has always been with some reserve; insinuating his uncorrectness, a careless manner of writing, and want of judgment. The praise of seldom altering or blotting out what he writ, which was given him by the players, who were the first publishers of his works after his death, was what Jonson could not bear: he thought it impossible, perhaps, for another man to strike out the greatest thoughts in the finest expression, and to reach those excellencies of poetry with the ease of a first imagination, which himself with infinite labour and study could but hardly attain to."

I have preserved this passage because I believe it strictly true, except that in the last line, instead of *but hardly*, I would read—*never*.

Dryden, we are told by Pope, concurred with Mr. Rowe in thinking Jonson's posthumous verses on our author *sparing* and *invidious*.—See also Mr. Steevens's note on those verses.

Before Shakspeare's death Ben's envious disposition is mentioned by one of his own friends; it must therefore have been even then notorious, though the writer denies the truth of the charge:

"To my well accomplish'd friend, Mr. Ben. Jonson.

"Thou art sound in body; but some say, thy soule

"*Envy doth ulcer*; yet corrupted hearts

"Such censurers must have."

Scourge of Folly, by J. Davies, printed about 1611.

The following lines by one of Jonson's admirers will sufficiently support Mr. Rowe in what he has said relative to the slowness of that writer in his compositions:

"Scorn then their censures who gave out, thy wit

"As long upon a comedy did sit

"As elephants bring forth, and that thy blots

"And mendings took more time than FORTUNE-PLOTS;

"That such thy drought was, and so great thy thirst,

"That all thy plays were drawn at the *Mermaid* first;

Jonson was certainly a very good scholar, and in that had the advantage of Shakspeare; though at

“ That the king’s yearly butt wrote, and his wine

“ Hath more right than thou to thy *Catiline*.”

The writer does not deny the charge, but vindicates his friend by saying that, however slow,

“ He that writes well, writes quick.—”

Verses on B. Jonson, by Jasper Mayne.

So also another of his Panegyrist:

“ Admit his muse was slow, ’tis judgment’s fate

“ To move like greatest princes, still in state.”

In *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606, Jonson is said to be “ so slow an enditer, that he were better betake himself to his old trade of bricklaying.” The same piece furnishes us with the earliest intimation of the quarrel between him and Shakspeare. “ Why here’s our fellow Shakspeare put them [the university poets] all down, ay, and Ben Jonson too. O, that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow; he brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakspeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.” Fuller, who was a diligent inquirer, and lived near enough the time to be well informed, confirms this account, asserting in his *Worthies*, 1662, that “ many were the wit-combats” between Jonson and our poet.

It is a singular circumstance that old Ben should for near two centuries have stalked on the stilts of an artificial reputation; and that even at this day, of the very few who read his works, scarcely one in ten yet ventures to confess how little entertainment they afford. Such was the impression made on the publick by the extravagant praises of those who knew more of books than of the drama, that Dryden in his *Essay on Dramatick Poesie*, written about 1667, does not venture to go further in his elogium on Shakspeare, than by saying, “ he was at least *Jonson’s equal*, if not his superior;” and in the preface to his *Mock Astrologer*, 1671, he hardly dares to assert, what, in my opinion, cannot be denied, that “ all Jonson’s pieces, except three or four, are but *crambe bis coëta*; the same humours a little varied and written worse.”

Ben however did not trust to the praises of others. One of his admirers honestly confesses,

“ ————— he

“ Of whom I write this, has prevented me,

“ And boldly said so much in his own praise,

“ No other pen need any trophy raise.”

In vain, however, did he endeavour to bully the town into approbation by telling his auditors, “ By G — ’tis good, and if you

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the same time I believe it must be allowed, that what nature gave the latter, was more than a balance

like't, you may ;" and by pouring out against those who preferred our poet to him, a torrent of illiberal abuse ; which, as Mr. Walpole justly observes, some of his contemporaries were willing to think wit, because they were afraid of it : for, notwithstanding all his arrogant boasts, notwithstanding all the clamour of his partizans both in his own life-time and for sixty years after his death, the truth is, that his pieces, when first performed, were so far from being applauded by the people, that they were scarcely endured ; and many of them were actually *damned*.

" — the fine plush and velvets of the age

" Did oft for sixpence *damn thee* from the stage," —

says one of his eulogists in *Jonsonius Virbius*, 4to. 1638. Jonson himself owns that *Sejanus* was damned. " It is a poem," says he, in his dedication to lord Aubigny, " that, if I well remember, in your lordship's fight suffered no less violence from our people here, than the subject of it did from the rage of the people of Rome." His friend E. B. (probably Edmund Bolton,) speaking of the same performance, says,

" But when I view'd the people's beastly rage,

" Bent to confound thy grave and learned toil,

" That cost thee so much sweat and so much oil,

" My indignation I could hardly assuage."

Again, in his dedication of *Catiline* to the earl of Pembroke, the author says, " Posterity may pay your benefit the honour and thanks, when it shall know that you dare in these jig-given times to countenance a legitimate poem. I must call it so, *against all noise of opinion*, from whose crude and ayrie reports I appeal to that great and singular facultie of judgment in your lordship."

See also the Epilogue to *Every man in his humour*, by lord Buckhurst, quoted below in *the Account of our old English Theatres, ad finem*. To his testimony and that of Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, (there also mentioned,) may be added that of Leonard Digges in his Verses on Shakspeare, and of Sir Robert Howard, who says in the preface to his Plays, folio, 1665, (not thirty years after Ben's death,) " When I consider how severe the former age has been to some of the *best* of Mr. Jonson's never-to-be-equall'd comedies, I cannot but wonder, why any poet should speak of former times." The truth is, that however extravagant the elogiums were that a few scholars gave him in their closets, he was not only not admired in his own time by the generality, but not even understood. His friend Beaumont assures him in a copy of verses, that " his sense is so deep that he will not be understood for three ages to come." MALONE.

for what books had given the former; and the judgment of a great man upon this occasion was, I think, very just and proper. In a conversation between Sir John Suckling, Sir William D'Avenant, Endymion Porter, Mr. Hales of Eton, and Ben Jonson, Sir John Suckling, who was a professed admirer of Shakspeare, had undertaken his defence against Ben Jonson with some warmth; Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time, told them,⁹ *That if Mr. Shakspeare had not read the ancients, he had likewise not stolen any thing from them; and that if he would produce any one topick finely treated by any one of them, he would undertake to shew something upon the same subject at least as well written by Shakspeare.*²

⁹ Mr. Hales, *who had sat still for some time, told them,*] In Mr. Rowe's first edition this passage runs thus:

"Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time, *bearing Ben frequently reproach him with the want of learning and ignorance of the antients*, told him at last, *That if Mr. Shakspeare,*" &c. By the alteration, the subsequent part of the sentence—"if he would produce," &c. is rendered ungrammatical. MALONE.

² — *he would undertake to shew something upon the same subject at least as well written by Shakspeare.*] I had long endeavoured in vain to find out on what authority this relation was founded; and have very lately discovered that Mr. Rowe probably derived his information from Dryden: for in Gildon's *Letters and Essays*, published in 1694, fifteen years before this Life appeared, the same story is told; and Dryden, to whom an Essay in vindication of Shakspeare is addressed, is appealed to by the writer as his authority. As Gildon tells the story with some slight variations from the account given by Mr. Rowe, and the book in which it is found is now extremely scarce, I shall subjoin the passage in his own words:

"But to give the world some satisfaction that Shakspeare has had as great veneration paid his excellence by men of unquestioned parts, as this I now express for him, I shall give some account of what I have heard *from your mouth*, sir, about the noble triumph he gained over all the ancients, by the judgment of the ablest criticks of that time.

The latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends. He

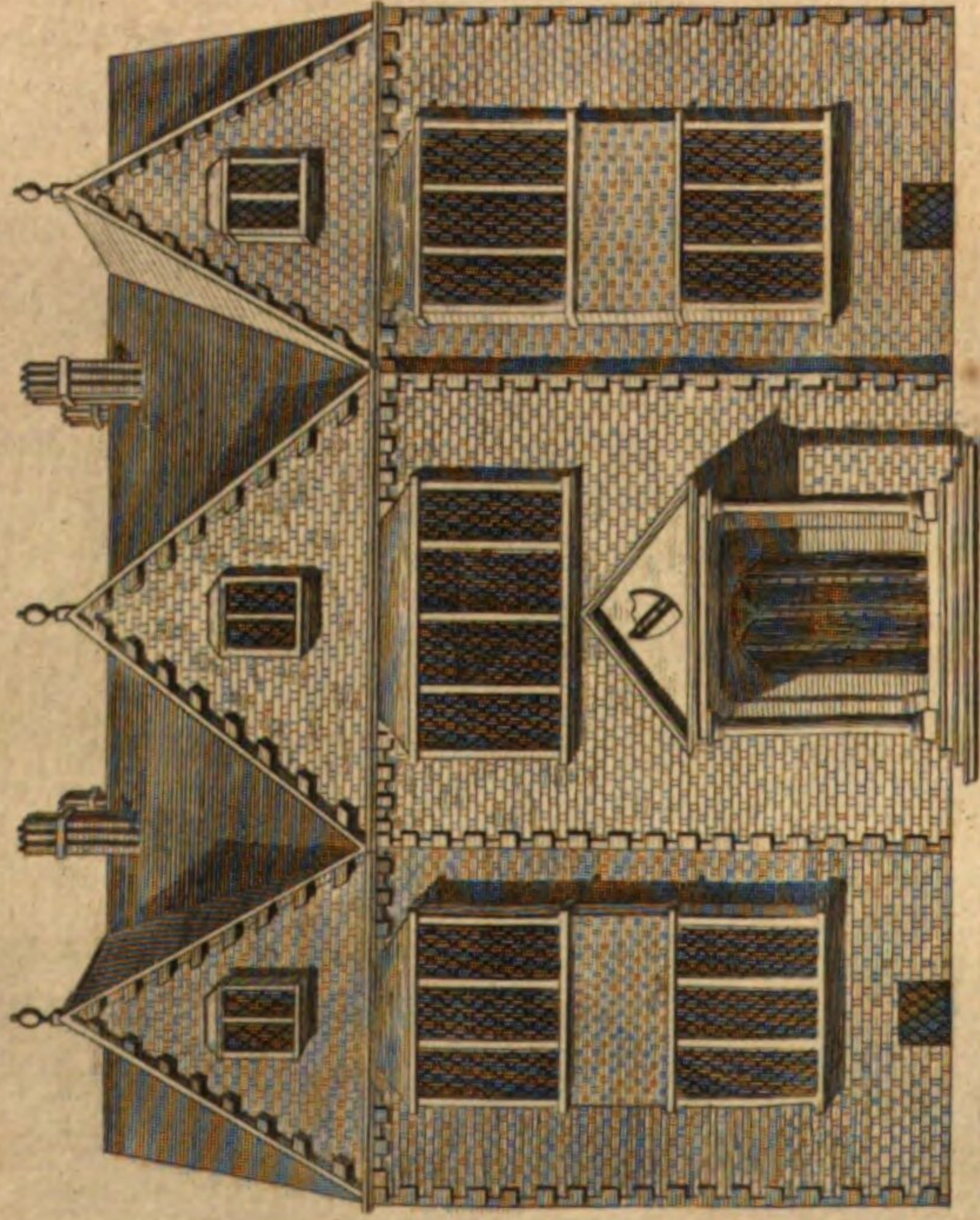
“ The matter of fact, if my memory fail me not, was this. Mr. Hales of Eton affirmed, that he would shew all the poets of antiquity out-done by Shakspeare, in all the topicks and common-places made use of in poetry. The enemies of Shakspeare would by no means yield him so much excellence; so that it came to a resolution of a trial of skill upon that subject. The place agreed on for the dispute was Mr. Hales’s chamber at Eton. A great many books were sent down by the enemies of this poet; and on the appointed day my lord Falkland, Sir John Suckling, and all the persons of quality that had wit and learning, and interested themselves in the quarrel, met there; and upon a thorough disquisition of the point, the judges chosen by agreement out of this learned and ingenious assembly, unanimously gave the preference to Shakspeare, and the Greek and Roman poets were adjudged to vail at least their glory in that, to the English Hero.”

This elogium on our author is likewise recorded at an earlier period by Tate, probably from the same authority, in the preface to the *Loyal General*, quarto, 1680: “ Our learned Hales was wont to assert, that, since the time of Orpheus, and the oldest poets, no common-place has been touched upon, where our author has not performed as well.”

Dryden himself also certainly alludes to this story, which he appears to have related both to Gildon and Rowe, in the following passage of his *Essay of Dramatick Poesy*, 1667; and he as well as Gildon goes somewhat further than Rowe in his panegyrick. After giving that fine character of our poet which Dr. Johnson has quoted in his preface, he adds, “ The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eton say, *that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it MUCH BETTER done by Shakspeare*; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him, Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: And in the last king’s court [that of Charles I.] when Ben’s reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers set our Shakspeare far above him.”

Let ever-memorable Hales, if all his other merits be forgotten, be ever mentioned with honour, for his good taste and admiration of our poet. “ He was,” says Lord Clarendon, “ one of the least men in the kingdom; and one of the greatest scholars in Europe.” See a long character of him in Clarendon’s Life, Vol. I. p. 52,

MALONE.



L. Jordan del.

A. Birrell sc.

NEW PLACE,

From a Drawing in the Margin of an Ancient SURVEY, made by Order of SIR GEORGE CAREW, (afterwards BARON CAREW of CLOPTON, and EARL of TOTNESS) and found at CLOPTON near STAFFORD upon AVON, in 1786.

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had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion,³ and, in that, to his wish; and is said to have spent some years before his death at his native Stratford.⁴ His pleasureable wit and good-

³ *He had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion,*] Gildon, without authority, I believe, says, that our author left behind him an estate of 300l. per ann. This was equal to at least 1000l. per ann. at this day; the relative value of money, the mode of living in that age, the luxury and taxes of the present time, and various other circumstances, being considered. But I doubt whether all his property amounted to much more than 200l. per ann. which yet was a considerable fortune in those times. He appears from his grand-daughter's will to have possessed in Bishopton, and Stratford Welcombe, four yard land and a half. *A yard land* is a denomination well known in Warwickshire, and contains from 30 to 60 acres. The average therefore being 45, four yard land and a half may be estimated at about two hundred acres. As sixteen years purchase was the common rate at which land was sold at that time, that is, one half less than at this day, we may suppose that these lands were let at seven shillings per acre, and produced 70l. per annum. If we rate the *New-Place* with the appurtenances, and our poet's other houses in Stratford, at 60l. a year, and his house &c. in the Blackfriars, (for which he pay'd 140l.) at 20l. a year, we have a rent-roll of 150l. per annum. Of his personal property it is not now possible to form any accurate estimate: but if we rate it at five hundred pounds, money then bearing an interest of ten per cent, Shakspeare's total income was 200l. per ann.* In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which was written soon after the year 1600, *Three hundred pounds a year* is described as an estate of such magnitude as to cover all the defects of its possessor:

“ O, what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults

“ Look handsome in three hundred pounds a year.”

MALONE.

⁴ — *to have spent some years before his death at his native Stratford.*] In 1614 the greater part of the town of Stratford was consumed by fire; but our Shakspeare's house, among some others, escaped the flames. This house was first built by Sir Hugh Clopton, a younger brother of an ancient family in that neighbourhood. Sir Hugh was Sheriff of London in the reign of Richard III. and

* To Shakspeare's income from his real and personal property must be added £. 200 per Ann. which he probably derived from the theatre, while he continued on the stage. See Vol. II. p. 292.

nature engaged him in the acquaintance, and entitled him to the friendship, of the gentlemen of the

Lord-Mayor in the reign of King Henry VII. By his will he bequeathed to his elder brother's son his manor of Clopton, &c. and his house, by the name of the Great House in Stratford. Good part of the estate is yet [in 1733] in the possession of Edward Clopton, esq. and Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. lineally descended from the elder brother of the first Sir Hugh.

The estate had now been sold out of the Clopton family for above a century, at the time when Shakspeare became the purchaser: who having repaired and modelled it to his own mind, changed the name to *New-Place*, which the mansion-house since erected upon the same spot, at this day retains. The house, and lands which attended it, continued in Shakspeare's descendants to the time of the Restoration; when they were re-purchased by the Clopton family, and the mansion now belongs to Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. To the favour of this worthy gentleman I owe the knowledge of one particular in honour of our poet's once dwelling-house, of which I presume Mr. Rowe never was apprized. When the Civil War raged in England, and King Charles the First's Queen was driven by the necessity of her affairs to make a recess in Warwickshire, she kept her court for three weeks in *New-Place*. We may reasonably suppose it then the best private house in the town; and her Majesty preferred it to the College, which was in the possession of the Combe family, who did not so strongly favour the king's party. THEOBALD.

From Mr. Theobald's words the reader may be led to suppose that Henrietta Maria was obliged to take refuge from the rebels in Stratford-upon-Avon: but that was not the case. She marched from Newark, June 16, 1643, and entered Stratford-upon-Avon triumphantly, about the 22d of the same month, at the head of three thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, with 150 waggons and a train of artillery. Here she was met by Prince Rupert, accompanied by a large body of troops. After sojourning about three weeks at our poet's house, which was then possessed by his granddaughter Mrs. Nash, and her husband, the Queen went (July 13) to the plain of Keinton under Edge-hill, to meet the king, and proceeded from thence with him to Oxford, where says a contemporary historian, "her coming (July 15) was rather to a triumph than a war."

Of the college above-mentioned the following was the origin. John de Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, in the fifth year of King Edward III. founded a Chantry consisting of five priests, one of whom was Warden, in a certain chapel adjoining to the church of

neighbourhood. Amongst them, it is a story almost still remembered in that country that he had a par-

Stratford on the south side; and afterwards (in the seventh year of Henry VIII.) Ralph Collingwode instituted four choristers, to be daily assistant in the celebration of divine service there. This chantry, says Dugdale, soon after its foundation, was known by the name of *The College* of Stratford-upon-Avon.

In the 26th year of Edward III. "a house of square stone" was built by Ralph de Stratford, bishop of London, for the habitation of the five priests. This house, or another on the same spot, is the house of which Mr. Theobald speaks. It still bears the name of "The College," and at present belongs to the Rev. Mr. Fullerton.

After the suppression of religious houses, the site of the college was granted by Edward VI. to John earl of Warwick and his heirs; who being attainted in the 1st year of Queen Mary, it reverted to the crown.

Sir John Clopton, knight, (the father of Edward Clopton, esq. and Sir Hugh Clopton,) who died at Stratford-upon-Avon in April 1719, purchased the estate of New-Place, &c. some time after the year 1685, from Sir Reginald Forster, Baronet, who married Mary, the daughter of Edward Nash, esq. cousin-german to Thomas Nash, esq. who married our poet's grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall. Edward Nash bought it, after the death of her second husband, Sir John Barnard, knight. By her will, which will be found in a subsequent page, she directed her trustee, Henry Smith, to sell the New-Place, &c. (after the death of her husband,) and to make the first offer of it to her cousin Edward Nash, who purchased it accordingly. His son Thomas Nash, whom for the sake of distinction I shall call the younger, having died without issue, in August 1652, Edward Nash by his will, made on the 16th of March, 1678-9, devised the principal part of his property to his daughter Mary, and her husband Reginald Forster, esq. afterwards Sir Reginald Forster; but in consequence of the testator's only referring to a deed of settlement executed three days before, without reciting the substance of it, no particular mention of New-Place is made in his will. After Sir John Clopton had bought it from Sir Reginald Forster, he gave it by deed to his younger son, Sir Hugh, who pulled down our poet's house, and built one more elegant on the same spot.

In May 1742, when Mr. Garrick, Mr. Macklin, and Mr. Deane, visited Stratford, they were hospitably entertained under Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, by Sir Hugh Clopton. He was a barrister at law, was knighted by George the First, and died in the

ticular intimacy with Mr. Combe,^s an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury: it

80th year of his age, in Dec. 1751. His nephew Edward Clopton, the son of his elder brother Edward, lived till June 1753.

The only remaining person of the Clopton family now living (1788), as I am informed by the Rev. Mr. Davenport, is Mrs. Partheriche, daughter and heiress of the second Edward Clopton above-mentioned. "She resides," he adds, "at the family mansion at Clopton near Stratford, is now a widow, and never had any issue."

The New Place was sold by Henry Talbot, esq. son-in-law and executor of Sir Hugh Clopton, in or soon after the year 1752, to the Rev. Mr. Gastrell, a man of large fortune, who resided in it but a few years; in consequence of a disagreement with the inhabitants of Stratford. Every house in that town that is let or valued at more than 40s. a year, is assessed by the Overseers, according to its worth and the ability of the occupier, to pay a monthly rate toward the maintenance of the poor. As Mr. Gastrell resided part of the year at Lichfield, he thought he was assessed too highly; but being very properly compelled by the magistrates of Stratford to pay the whole of what was levied on him, on the principle that his house was occupied by his servants in his absence, he peevishly declared, that *that* house should never be assessed again; and soon afterwards pulled it down, sold the materials, and left the town. Wishing, as it should seem, to be "damn'd to everlasting fame," he had some time before cut down Shakspeare's celebrated mulberry-tree, to save himself the trouble of shewing it to those whose admiration of our great poet led them to visit the poetick ground on which it stood.

That Shakspeare planted this tree, is as well authenticated as any thing of that nature can be. The Rev. Mr. Davenport informs me, that Mr. Hugh Taylor, (the father of his clerk,) who is now eighty-five years old, and an alderman of Warwick, where he at present resides, says, he lived when a boy at the next house to New-Place; that his family had inhabited the house for almost three hundred years; that it was transmitted from father to son during the last and the present century, that this tree (of the fruit of which he had often eaten in his younger days, some of its branches hanging over his father's garden,) was planted by Shakspeare; and that till this was planted, there was no mulberry-tree in that neighbourhood. Mr. Taylor adds, that he was frequently, when a boy, at New-Place, and that this tradition was preserved in the Clopton family, as well as in his own.

There were scarce any trees of this species in England till the

happened, that in a pleasant conversation amongst their common friends, Mr. Combe told Shakspeare

year 1609, when by order of King James many hundred thousand young mulberry-trees were imported from France, and sent into the different counties, with a view to the feeding of filkworms, and the encouragement of the silk manufacture. See *Camdeni Annales ab anno 1603 ad annum 1623*, published by Smith, quarto, 1691, p. 7; and Howes's Abridgment of Stowe's *Chronicle*, edit. 1618, p. 503, where we have a more particular account of this transaction than in the larger work. A very few mulberry-trees had been planted before; for we are told, that in the preceding year a gentleman of Picardy, Monsieur Forest, "kept greate store of English filkworms at Greenwich, the which the king with great pleasure came often to see them worke; and of their silke he caused a piece of taffata to be made."

Shakspeare was perhaps the only inhabitant of Stratford, whose business called him annually to London; and probably on his return from thence in the spring of the year 1609, he planted this tree.

As a similar enthusiasm to that which with such diligence has sought after Virgil's tomb, may lead my countrymen to visit the spot where our great bard spent several years of his life, and died; it may gratify them to be told that the ground on which *The New-Place* once stood, is now a Garden belonging to Mr. Charles Hunt, an eminent attorney, and town-clerk of Stratford. Every Englishman will, I am sure, concur with me in wishing that it may enjoy perpetual verdure and fertility.

In this retreat our SHAKSPEARE's godlike mind

With matchless skill survey'd all human kind.

Here may each sweet that blest Arabia knows,

Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose,

To latest time, their balmy odours fling,

And Nature here display eternal spring! MALONE.

^s — that he had a particular intimacy with Mr. Combe,] This Mr. John Combe I take to be the same, who by Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, is said to have died in the year 1614, and for whom at the upper end of the quire of the guild of the holy cross at Stratford, a fair monument is erected, having a statue thereon cut in alabaster, and in a gown, with this epitaph. "Here lyeth interred the body of John Combe, Esq. who departing this life the 10th day of July, 1614, bequeathed by his last will and testament these sums ensuing, annually to be paid for ever; viz. xx. s. for two sermons to be preach'd in this church, and vi. l. xiii. s. iv. d. to buy ten gownes for ten poore people within the borough

in a laughing manner, that he fancied he intended to write his epitaph, if he happened to out-live him; and since he could not know what might be said of him when he was dead, he desired it might be done immediately; upon which Shakspeare gave him these four verses:

“ *Ten in the hundred* lies here ingrav’d;⁶
 “ ’Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav’d:
 “ If any man ask, Who lies in this tomb?
 “ Oh! ho! quoth the devil, ’tis my John-a-Combe.”⁷

of Stratford; and 100l. to be lent to fifteen poore tradesmen of the same borough, from three years to three years, changing the parties every third year, at the rate of fifty shillings per annum, the which increase he appointed to be distributed towards the relief of the almes-poor there.” The donation has all the air of a rich and sagacious usurer. THEOBALD.

⁶ *Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav’d;*] In *The more the merrier*, containing three score and odd headless epigrams, shot, (like the fool’s bolts) among you, light where they will: By H. P. Gent. &c. 1608. I find the following couplet, which is almost the same as the two beginning lines of this *Epitaph on John-a-Combe*:

FENERATORIS EPITAPHIUM.

“ Ten in the hundred lies under this stone,
 “ And a hundred to ten to the devil he’s gone.”

Again, in *Wit’s Interpreter*, 8vo. 3d edit. 1671, p. 298:

“ Here lies at least ten in the hundred,
 “ Shackled up both hands and feet,
 “ That at such as lent mony gratis wondred,
 “ The gain of usury was so sweet:
 “ But thus being now of life bereav’n,
 “ ’Tis a hundred to ten he’s scarce gone to heav’n.”

STEEVENS.

So, in Camden’s *Remains*, 1614:

“ Here lyes ten in the hundred,
 “ In the ground fast ramm’d;
 “ ’Tis an hundred to ten
 “ But his soule is damn’d.” MALONE.

⁷ *Oh! ho! quoth the devil, ’tis my John-a-Combe.*] The Rev. Francis Peck, in his *Memoirs of the Life and Poetical Works of Mr. John Milton*, 4to. 1740, p. 223, has introduced another epitaph

But the sharpness of the satire is said to have stung the man so severely, that he never forgave it.⁸

imputed (on what authority is unknown) to Shakspeare. It is on *Tom-a-Combe*, alias *Thin-beard*, brother to this *John*, who is mentioned by Mr. Rowe.

“ Thin in beard, and thick in purse;

“ Never man beloved worse;

“ He went to the grave with many a curse:

“ The devil and he had both one nurse.” STEEVENS.

I suspect that these lines were sent to Mr. Peck by some person that meant to impose upon him. It appears from Mr. John Combe's will, that his brother Thomas was dead in 1614. John devised the greater part of his real and personal estate to his *nephew* Thomas Combe, with whom Shakspeare was certainly on good terms, having bequeathed him his sword.

Since I wrote the above, I find from the Register of Stratford, that Mr. Thomas Combe (the brother of John) was buried there, Jan. 22, 1609-10. MALONE.

⁸ ——— *the sharpness of the satire is said to have stung the man so severely, that he never forgave it.*] I take this opportunity to avow my disbelief that Shakspeare was the author of Mr. Combe's Epitaph, or that it was written by any other person at the request of that gentleman. If Betterton the player did really visit Warwickshire for the sake of collecting anecdotes relative to our author, perhaps he was too easily satisfied with such as fell in his way, without making any rigid search into their authenticity. It appears also from a following copy of this inscription, that it was not ascribed to Shakspeare so early as two years after his death. Mr. Reed of Staple-Inn obligingly pointed it out to me in the *Remains*, &c. of Richard Braithwaite, 1618; and as his edition of our epitaph varies in some measure from the latter one published by Mr. Rowe, I shall not hesitate to transcribe it:

“ Upon one *John Combe* of *Stratford upon Avon*, a notable Usurer, fastened upon a Tombe that he had caused to be built in his Life-Time:

“ Ten in the hundred must lie in his grave,

“ But a hundred to ten whether God will him have:

“ Who then must be interr'd in this tombe?

“ Oh (quoth the divill) my *John a Combe.*”

Here it may be observed that, strictly speaking, this is no jocular epitaph, but a malevolent prediction; and Braithwaite's copy is surely more to be depended on (being procured in or before the

He died in the 53d year of his age,⁹ and was bu-

year 1618) than that delivered to Betterton or Rowe, almost a century afterwards. It has been already remarked, that two of the lines said to have been produced on this occasion, were printed as an epigram in 1608, by H. P. Gent. and are likewise found in Camden's *Remains*, 1614. I may add, that a usurer's solicitude to know what would be reported of him when he was dead, is not a very probable circumstance; neither was Shakspeare of a disposition to compose an invective, at once so bitter and uncharitable, during a *pleasant conversation among the common friends* of himself and a gentleman, with whose family he lived in such friendship, that at his death he bequeathed his sword to Mr. Thomas Combe as a legacy. A miser's monument indeed, constructed during his life-time, might be regarded as a challenge to satire; and we cannot wonder that anonymous lampoons should have been affixed to the marble designed to convey the character of such a being to posterity.—I hope I may be excused for this attempt to vindicate Shakspeare from the imputation of having poisoned the hour of confidence and festivity, by producing the severest of all censures on one of his company. I am unwilling, in short, to think he could so wantonly and so publicly have expressed his doubts concerning the salvation of one of his fellow-creatures. STEEVENS.

Since the above observations first appeared, (in a note to the edition of our author's Poems which I published in 1780,) I have obtained an additional proof of what has been advanced, in vindication of Shakspeare on this subject. It occurred to me that the will of John Combe might possibly throw some light on this matter, and an examination of it some years ago furnished me with such evidence as renders the story recorded in Braithwaite's *Remains* very doubtful; and still more strongly proves that, whoever was the author of this epitaph, it is highly improbable that it should have been written by Shakspeare.

The very first direction given by Mr. Combe in his Will is, concerning a tomb to be erected to him *after his death*. "My will is, that a convenient tomb of the value of threescore pounds shall by my executors hereafter named, out of my goods and chattels first rayfed, within one year after my decease, be set over me." So much for Braithwaite's account of his having erected his own tomb in his life-time. That he had any quarrel with our author, or that Shakspeare had by any act *stung him so severely that Mr. Combe never forgave him*, appears equally void of foundation; for by his will he bequeaths "to Mr. William Shakspeare Five Pounds." It is probable that they lived in intimacy, and that Mr. Combe had made some purchase from our poet; for he devises to his brother George, "the close or grounds known by the name of Parson's Close, *alias*

ried on the north side of the chancel, in the great

Shakspeare's Close." It must be owned that Mr. Combe's will is dated Jan. 28, 1612-13, about eighteen months before his death; and therefore the evidence now produced is not absolutely decisive, as he might have erected a tomb, and a rupture might have happened between him and Shakspeare, after the making of this will: but it is very improbable that any such rupture should have taken place; for if the supposed cause of offence had happened subsequently to the execution of the instrument, it is to be presumed that he would have revoked the legacy to Shakspeare: and the same argument may be urged with respect to the direction concerning his tomb.

Mr. Combe by his will bequeaths to Mr. Francis Collins the elder, of the borough of Warwick, (who appears as a legatee and subscribing witness to Shakspeare's will, and therefore may be presumed a common friend,) ten pounds; to his godson John Collins, (the son of Francis,) ten pounds; to Mrs. Susanna Collins (probably godmother to our poet's eldest daughter) six pounds, thirteen shillings, and four-pence; to Mr. Henry Walker, (father to Shakspeare's godson,) twenty shillings; to the poor of Stratford twenty pounds; and to his servants, in various legacies, one hundred and ten pounds. He was buried at Stratford, July 12, 1614, and his will was proved, Nov. 10, 1615.

Our author, at the time of making *his* will, had it not in his power to shew any testimony of his regard for Mr. Combe, that gentleman being then dead; but that he continued a friendly correspondence with his family to the last, appears evidently (as Mr. Steevens has observed) from his leaving his sword to Mr. Thomas Combe, the nephew, residuary legatee, and one of the executors of John.

On the whole we may conclude, that the lines preserved by Rowe, and inserted with some variation in Braithwaite's *Remains*, which the latter has mentioned to have been affixed to Mr. Combe's tomb in his life-time, were not written till after Shakspeare's death; for the executors, who did not prove the will till Nov. 1615, could not well have erected "a fair monument" of considerable expence for those times, till the middle or perhaps the end of the year 1616, in the April of which year our poet died. Between that time and the year 1618, when Braithwaite's book appeared, some one of those persons (we may presume) who had suffered by Mr. Combe's severity, gave vent to his feelings in the satirical composition preserved by Rowe; part of which, we have seen, was borrowed from epitaphs that had already been printed.—That Mr. Combe was a money-lender, may be inferred from a clause in his will, in which he mentions his "good and just debtors;" to every one of whom

church at Stratford, where a monument is placed

he remits "twenty shillings for every twenty pounds, and so after this rate for a greater or lesser debt," on their paying in to his executors what they owe.

Mr. Combe married Mrs. Rose Clopton, August 27, 1560; and therefore was probably, when he died, eighty years old. His property, from the description of it, appears to have been considerable.

In justice to this gentleman it should be remembered, that in the language of Shakspeare's age an *usurer* did not mean one who took exorbitant, but any, interest or usance for money; which many then considered as criminal. The opprobrious term by which such a person was distinguished, *Ten in the hundred*, proves this; for *ten* per cent. was the ordinary interest of money. See Shakspeare's will.—Sir Philip Sidney directs by his will, made in 1586, that Sir Francis Walsingham shall put four thousand pounds which the testator bequeathed to his daughter, "to the best behoofe either by purchase of land or lease, or some other *good and godly* use, but in no case to let it out for any *usury* at all." MALONE.

⁹ *He died in the 53d year of his age,*] He died on his birth-day, April 23, 1616, and had exactly completed his fifty-second year. From Du Cange's Perpetual Almanack, Gloss. in v. *Annus*, (making allowance for the different style which then prevailed in England from that on which Du Cange's calculation was formed,) it appears, that the 23d of April in that year was a Tuesday.

No account has been transmitted to us of the malady which at so early a period of life deprived England of its brightest ornament. The private note-book of his son-in-law Dr. Hall,* containing a short state of the cases of his patients, was a few years ago put into my hands by my friend, the late Dr. Wright; and as Dr. Hall married our poet's daughter in the year 1607, and undoubtedly attended Shakspeare in his last illness, being then forty years old, I had hopes this book might have enabled me to gratify the publick curiosity on this subject. But unluckily the earliest case recorded by Hall, is dated in 1617. He had probably filled some other book with memorandums of his practice in preceding years; which by some contingency may hereafter be found, and inform posterity of the particular circumstances that attended the death of our great poet.—From the 34th page of this book, which contains an account of a disorder under which his daughter Elizabeth laboured (about

* Dr. Hall's pocket-book after his death fell into the hands of a surgeon of Warwick, who published a translation of it, (with some additions of his own) under the title of *Select Observations on the English bodies of eminent persons, in desperate diseases, &c.* The third edition was printed in 1683.

in the wall.² On his grave-stone underneath is,

“ Good friend,³ for Jesus’ sake forbear
 “ To dig the dust inclosed here.
 “ Blest be the man that spares these stones,
 “ And curst be he that moves my bones.”⁴

the year 1624,) and of the method of cure, it appears, that she was his only daughter; [Elizabeth Hall, filia mea *unica*, tortura oris defædata.] In the beginning of April in that year she visited London, and returned to Stratford on the 22d; an enterprize at that time “ of great pith and moment.”

While we lament that our incomparable poet was snatched from the world at a time when his faculties were in their full vigour, and before he was “ declined into the vale of years,” let us be thankful that “ this sweetest child of Fancy” did not perish while he yet lay in the cradle. He was born at Stratford-upon-Avon in April 1564; and I have this moment learned from the Register of that town that the plague broke out there on the 30th of the following June, and raged with such violence between that day and the last day of December, that two hundred and thirty-eight persons were in that period carried to the grave, of which number probably 216 died of that malignant distemper; and one only of the whole number resided, not in Stratford, but in the neighbouring town of Welcombe. From the 237 inhabitants of Stratford, whose names appear in the Register, twenty-one are to be subducted, who, it may be presumed, would have died in six months, in the ordinary course of nature; for in the five preceding years, reckoning, according to the style of that time, from March 25, 1559, to March 25, 1564, two hundred and twenty-one persons were buried at Stratford, of whom 210 were townsmen: that is, of these latter 42 died each year, at an average. Supposing one in thirty-five to have died annually, the total number of the inhabitants of Stratford at that period was 1470; and consequently the plague in the last six months of the year 1564 carried off more than a seventh part of them. Fortunately for mankind it did not reach the house in which the infant Shakspeare lay; for not one of that name appears in the dead list.—May we suppose, that, like Horace, he lay secure and fearless in the midst of contagion and death, protected by the Muses to whom his future life was to be devoted, and covered over

————— sacra
 Lauroque, collataque myrto,
 Non sine Diis animosus infans. MALONE.

² ——— where a monument is placed in the wall.] He is represented

under an arch, in a sitting posture, a cushion spread before him, with a pen in his right-hand, and his left rested on a scroll of paper. The following Latin distich is engraved under the cushion :

*Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.* THEOBALD.

The first syllable in *Socratem* is here made short, which cannot be allowed. Perhaps we should read *Sophoclem*. Shakspeare is then appositely compared with a dramattick author among the ancients : but still it should be remembered that the elogium is lessened while the metre is reformed ; and it is well known that some of our early writers of Latin poetry were uncommonly negligent in their prosody, especially in proper names. The thought of this distich, as Mr. Tollet observes, might have been taken from *The Faëry Queene* of Spenser, B. II. c. ix. st. 48, and c. x. st. 3.

To this Latin inscription on Shakspeare should be added the lines which are found underneath it on his monument :

Stay, passenger, why dost thou go so fast?
Read, if thou canst, whom envious death hath plac'd
Within this monument ; Shakspeare, with whom
Quick nature dy'd ; whose name doth deck the tomb
Far more than cost ; since all that he hath writ
Leaves living art but page to serve his wit.

Obiit An^o. Dñi. 1616.

æt. 53, die 23 Apri. STEEVENS.

It appears from the Verses of Leonard Digges that our author's monument was erected before the year 1623. It has been engraved by Vertue, and done in Mezzotinto by Miller.

A writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. XXIX. p. 267, says, there is as strong a resemblance between the bust at Stratford, and the portrait of our author prefixed to the first folio edition of his plays, "as can well be between a statue and a picture." To me (and I have viewed it several times with a good deal of attention) it appeared in a very different light. When I went last to Stratford, I carried with me the only genuine prints of Shakspeare that were then extant, and I could not trace any resemblance between them and this figure. There is a pertness in the countenance of the latter totally differing from that placid composure and thoughtful gravity, so perceptible in his original portrait and his best prints. Our poet's monument having been erected by his son-in-law Dr. Hall, the statuary probably had the assistance of some picture, and failed only from want of skill to copy it.

Mr. Granger observes, (*Biog. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 259,) that "it has been said there never was an original portrait of Shakspeare, but that Sir Thomas Clarges after his death caused a portrait to be drawn for him from a person who nearly resembled him." This

entertaining writer was a great collector of anecdotes, but not always very scrupulous in inquiring into the authenticity of the information which he procured; for this improbable tale, I find, on examination, stands only on the assertion of an anonymous writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for August 1759, who boldly "affirmed it as an absolute fact;" but being afterwards publicly called upon to produce his authority, never produced any. There is the strongest reason therefore to presume it a forgery.

"Mr. Walpole" (adds Mr. Granger) "informs me, that the only original picture of Shakspeare is that which belonged to Mr. Keck, from whom it passed to Mr. Nicoll, whose only daughter married the Marquis of Caernarvon" [now duke of Chandos].

From this picture, his Grace, at my request, very obligingly permitted a drawing to be made by that excellent artist Mr. Ozias Humphry; and from that drawing the print prefixed to the present edition has been engraved.

In the manuscript notes of the late Mr. Oldys, this portrait is said to have been "painted by old Cornelius Jansen." "Others," he adds, "say, that it was done by Richard Burbage the player;" and in another place he ascribes it to "John Taylor, the player." This Taylor, it is said in *The Critical Review* for 1770, left it by will to Sir William D'Avenant. But unluckily there was no player of the christian and surname of John Taylor, contemporary with Shakspeare. The player who performed in Shakspeare's company, was Joseph Taylor. There was however a *painter* of the name of *John Taylor*, to whom in his early youth it is barely possible that we may have been indebted for the only original portrait of our author; for in the Picture-Gallery at Oxford are two portraits of 'Taylor the Water-poet, and on each of them "*John Taylor pinx. 1655.*" There appears some resemblance of *manner* between these portraits and the picture of Shakspeare in the duke of Chandos's collection. That picture (I express the opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds) has not the least air of Cornelius Jansen's performances.

That this picture was once in the possession of Sir Wm. D'Avenant is highly probable; but it is much more likely to have been *purchased* by him from some of the players after the theatres were shut up by authority, and the veterans of the stage were reduced to great distress, than to have been bequeathed to him by the person who painted it; in whose custody it is improbable that it should have remained. Sir William D'Avenant appears to have died insolvent. There is no Will of his in the Prerogative-Office; but administration of his effects was granted to John Otway, his *principal creditor*, in May 1668. After his death, Betterton the actor bought it, probably at a publick sale of his effects. While it was in Betterton's possession, it was engraved by Vandergucht, for Mr. Rowe's edition of Shakspeare, in 1709. Betterton made no will, and died very

indigent, He had a large collection of portraits of actors in crayons, which were bought at the sale of his goods by Bullfinch the Printfeller, who sold them to one Mr. Sykes. The portrait of Shakspeare was purchased by Mrs. Barry the actress, who sold it afterwards for 40 guineas to Mr. Robert Keck. In 1719, while it was in Mr. Keck's possession, an engraving was made from it by Vertue: a large half-sheet. Mr. Nicoll of Colney-Hatch, Middlesex, marrying the heiress of the Keck family, this picture devolved to him; and while in his possession, it was, in 1747, engraved by Houbraken for Birch's *Illustrious Heads*. By the marriage of the duke of Chandos with the daughter of Mr. Nicoll, it became his Grace's property.

Sir Godfrey Kneller painted a picture of our author, which he presented to Dryden, but from what picture he copied, I am unable to ascertain, as I have never seen Kneller's picture. The poet repayed him by an elegant copy of Verses.—See his Poems, Vol. II. p. 231, edit. 1743 :

“ Shakspeare, thy gift, I place before my sight,
 “ With awe I ask his blessing as I write;
 “ With reverence look on his majestick face,
 “ Proud to be less, but of his godlike race.
 “ His soul inspires me, while thy praise I write,
 “ And I like Teucer under Ajax fight:
 “ Bids thee, through me, be bold; with dauntless breast
 “ Contemn the bad, and emulate the best:
 “ Like his, thy criticks in the attempt are lost,
 “ When most they rail, know then, they envy most.”

It appears from a circumstance mentioned by Dryden, that these verses were written after the year 1683: probably after Rymer's book had appeared in 1693. Dryden having made no will, and his wife Lady Elizabeth renouncing, administration was granted on the 10th of June 1700, to his son Charles, who was drowned in the Thames near Windsor in 1704. His younger brother Erasmus succeeded to the title of Baronet, and died without issue in 1711; but I know not what became of his effects, or where this picture is now to be found.

About the year 1725 a mezzotinto of Shakspeare was scraped by Simon, said to be done from an original picture painted by Zouft or Soest, then in the possession of T. Wright, painter, in Covent-Garden. The earliest known picture painted by Zouft in England, was done in 1657; so that if he ever painted a picture of Shakspeare, it must have been a copy. It could not however have been made from D'Avenant's picture, (unless the painter took very great liberties) for the whole air, dress, disposition of the hair, &c. are different. I have lately seen a picture in the possession of — Douglas, Esq. at Teddington near Twickenham, which is, I believe, the very picture from which Simon's Mezzotinto was made.

It is on canvas, (about 24 inches by 20,) and somewhat smaller than the life.

The earliest print of our poet that appeared, is that in the title-page of the first folio edition of his works, 1623, engraved by Martin Droeshout. On this print the following lines, addressed TO THE READER, were written by Ben Jonson:

“ This figure that thou here seest put,
 “ It was for gentle Shakspeare cut;
 “ Wherein the graver had a strife
 “ With nature, to out-do the life.
 “ O, could he but have drawn his wit
 “ As well in brasse, as he hath hit
 “ His face, the print would then surpass
 “ All that was ever writ in brasse;
 “ But since he cannot, reader, look
 “ Not on his picture, but his book.”

Droeshout engraved also the heads of John Fox the martyrologist, Montjoy Blount, son of Charles Blount Earl of Devonshire, William Fairfax who fell at the siege of Frankendale in 1621, and John Howson, Bishop of Durham. The portrait of Bishop Howson is at Christ-church, Oxford. By comparing any of these prints (the two latter of which are well executed) with the original pictures from whence the engravings were made, a better judgment might be formed of the fidelity of our author's portrait, as exhibited by this engraver, than from Jonson's assertion, that “ in this figure

“ — the graver had a strife
 “ With nature, to out-do the life;”

a compliment which in the books of that age was paid to so many engravers, that nothing decisive can be inferred from it.—It does not appear from what picture this engraving was made: but from the dress, and the singular disposition of the hair, &c. it undoubtedly was engraved from a picture, and probably a very ordinary one. There is no other way of accounting for the great difference between this print of Droeshout's, and his spirited portraits of Fairfax and Bishop Howson, but by supposing that the picture of Shakspeare from which he copied was a very coarse performance.

The next print in point of time is, according to Mr. Walpole, and Mr. Granger, that executed by J. Payne, a scholar of Simon Pass, in 1634; with a laurel branch in the poet's left-hand. A print of Shakspeare by so excellent an engraver as Payne, would probably exhibit a more perfect representation of him than any other of those times; but I much doubt whether any such ever existed. Mr. Granger, I apprehend, has erroneously attributed to Payne the head done by Marshall in 1640, (apparently from Droeshout's larger print,) which is prefixed to a spurious edition of Shakspeare's Poems published in that year. In Marshall's print

the poet *has a laurel branch in his left hand*. Neither Mr. Walpole, nor any of the other great collectors of prints, are possessed of, or ever saw, any print of Shakspeare by Payne, as far as I can learn.

Two other prints only remain to be mentioned; one engraved by Vertue in 1721, for Mr. Pope's edition of our author's plays in quarto; said to be engraved from an original picture in the possession of the earl of Oxford; and another, a mezzotinto, by Earlom, prefixed to an edition of *King Lear*, in 1770; said to be done from an original by Cornelius Jansen, in the collection of Charles Jennens, Esq. but, Mr. Granger justly observes, "as it is dated in 1610, before Jansen was in England, it is highly probable that it was not painted by him, at least, that he did not paint it as a portrait of Shakspeare."

Most of the other prints of Shakspeare that have appeared, were copied from some or other of those which I have mentioned.

MALONE.

"The portrait palmed upon Mr. Pope" (I use the words of the late Mr. Oldys, in a Ms. note to his copy of Langbaine,) "for an original of Shakspeare, from which he had his fine plate engraven, is evidently a juvenile portrait of King James I." I am no judge in these matters, but only deliver an opinion, which if ill-grounded may be easily overthrown. The portrait, to me at least, has no traits of Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

³ *On his grave-stone underneath is, Good friend, &c.]* This epitaph is expressed in the following uncouth mixture of small and capital letters:

Good Frend for Iesus SAKE forbear
To digg T-E Dust EncloAsed HERe
Blese be ~~TE~~ Man $\frac{T}{Y}$ spares ~~TE~~s Stones
And curst be He $\frac{T}{Y}$ moves my Bones. STEEVENS.

⁴ *And curst be he that moves my bones.]* It is uncertain whether this epitaph was written by Shakspeare himself, or by one of his friends after his death. The imprecation contained in this last line, was perhaps suggested by an apprehension that our authour's remains might share the same fate with those of the rest of his countrymen, and be added to the immense pile of human bones deposited in the charnel-house at Stratford. This, however, is mere conjecture; for similar execrations are found in many ancient Latin epitaphs.

Mr. Steevens has justly mentioned it as a singular circumstance, that Shakspeare does not appear to have written any verses on his contemporaries, either in praise of the living, or in honour of the dead. I once imagined that he had mentioned Spenser with kindness in one of his Sonnets; but have lately discovered that the sonnet to which I allude, was written by Richard Barnefield. If, however, the following epitaphs be genuine, (and indeed the latter

is much in Shakspeare's manner,) he in two instances overcame that modest diffidence, which seems to have supposed the elogium of his humble muse of no value.

In a Manuscript volume of poems by William Herrick and others, in the hand-writing of the time of Charles I. which is among Rawlinson's Collections in the Bodleian Library, is the following epitaph, ascribed to our poet.

“ A N E P I T A P H .

“ When God was pleas'd, the world unwilling yet,
 “ Elias James to nature payd his debt,
 “ And here reposes; as he liv'd, he dyde;
 “ The saying in him strongly vereside,—
 “ Such life, such death: then, the known truth to tell,
 “ He liv'd a godly life, and dyde as well.

WM. SHAKSPEARE.”

There was formerly a family of the surname of *James* at Stratford. Anne, the wife of *Richard James*, was buried there on the same day with our poet's widow; and Margaret, the daughter of *John James*, died there in April 1616.

A monumental inscription “ of a better leer,” and said to be written by our author, is preserved in a collection of Epitaphs, at the end of the Visitation of Salop, taken by Sir William Dugdale in the year 1664, now remaining in the College of Arms, C. 35, fol. 20; a transcript of which Sir Isaac Heard, Garter, Principal King at Arms, has obligingly transmitted to me.

Among the monuments in Tongue Church in the county of Salop, is one erected in remembrance of Sir Thomas Stanley, knight, who died, as I imagine, about the year 1600. In the Visitation-book it is thus described by Sir William Dugdale:

“ On the north side of the chancell stands a very stately tombe, supported with Corinthian columnes. It hath two figures of men in armour, thereon lying, the one below the arches and columnes, and the other above them, and this epitaph upon it.

“ Thomas Stanley, Knight, second son of Edward Earle of Derby, Lord Stanley and Strange, descended from the famielie of the Stanleys, married Margaret Vernon, one of the daughters and co-heires of Sir George Vernon of Nether-Haddon, in the county of Derby, Knight, by whom he had issue two sons, Henry and Edward. Henry died an infant; Edward survived, to whom those lordships descended; and married the lady Lucie Percie, second daughter of the Earle of Northumberland: by her he had issue seaven daughters. She and her foure daughters, Arabella, Marie, Alice, and Priscilla, are interred under a monument in the church of Waltham in the county of Essex. Thomas, her son, died in his infancy, and is buried in the parish church of Winwich in the county of

He had three daughters,^s of which two lived to

Lancaster. The other three, Petronilla, Frances, and Venesia, are yet living.

These following verses were made by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, the late famous tragedian.

“ Written upon the east end of this tombe.

“ Aske who lyes here, but do not weepe;
 “ He is not dead, he doth but sleepe.
 “ This stony register is for his bones,
 “ His fame is more perpetual than these stones:
 “ And his own goodness, with himself being gone,
 “ Shall live, when earthly monument is none.

“ Written upon the west end thereof.

“ Not monumental stone preserves our fame,
 “ Nor skye-aspiring pyramids our name.
 “ The memory of him for whom this stands,
 “ Shall out-live marble, and defacers' hands.
 “ When all to time's consumption shall be given,
 “ Stanley, for whom this stands, shall stand in heaven.”

The last line of this epitaph, though the worst, bears very strong marks of the hand of Shakspeare. The beginning of the first line, “ Aske who lyes here,” reminds us of that which we have been just examining: “ *If any man ask, who lies in this tomb,*” &c.—And in the fifth line we find a thought which our poet has also introduced in *King Henry VIII*:

“ Ever belov'd and loving may his rule be!
 “ And, when old time shall lead him to his grave,
 “ *Goodness and he fill up one monument!*”

This epitaph must have been written after the year 1600, for Venetia Stanley, who afterwards was the wife of Sir Kenelm Digby, was born in that year. With a view to ascertain its date more precisely, the churches of Great and Little Waltham have been examined for the monument said to have been erected to Lady Lucy Stanley and her four daughters, but in vain; for no trace of it remains: nor could the time of their respective deaths be ascertained, the registers of those parishes being lost.—Sir William Dugdale was born in Warwickshire, was bred at the free-school of Coventry, and in the year 1625 purchased the manor of Blythe in that county, where he then settled and afterwards spent a great part of his life: so that his testimony respecting this epitaph is sufficient to ascertain its authenticity. MALONE.

^s *He had three daughters,*] In this circumstance Mr. Rowe must have been mis-informed. In the Register of Stratford, no mention

be married; Judith, the elder, to one Mr. Thomas Quiney,⁶ by whom she had three sons, who all died

is made of any daughter of our author's but Susanna and Judith. He had indeed three *children*; the two already mentioned, and a son, named Hamnet, of whom Mr. Rowe takes no notice. He was a twin child, born at the same time with Judith. Hence probably the mistake. He died in the twelfth year of his age, in 1596.

MALONE.

⁶ — Judith, *the elder, to one Mr. Thomas Quiney,*] This also is a mistake. Judith was Shakspeare's youngest daughter. She died at Stratford-upon-Avon a few days after she had completed her seventy-seventh year, and was buried there, Feb. 9, 1661-62. She was married to Mr. Quiney, who was four years younger than herself, on the 10th of February, 1615-16, and not as Mr. West supposed, in the year 1616-17. He was led into the mistake by the figures 1616 standing nearly opposite to the entry concerning her marriage; but those figures relate to the first entry in the subsequent month of April. The Register appears thus:

February.——

3. Francis Bushill to Isabel Whood.
 1616. 5. Rich. Sandells to Joan Ballamy.
 10. Tho. Queeny to Judith Shakspeare.

April.——

14. Will. Borowes to Margaret Davies.

and all the following entries in that and a part of the ensuing page are of 1616; the year then beginning on the 25th of March. Whether the above 10 relates to the month of February or April, Judith was certainly married before her father's death; if it relates to February, she was married on February 10, 1615-16; if to April, on the 10th of April 1616. From Shakspeare's will it appears, that this match was a stolen one; for he speaks of such future "*husband as she shall be married to.*" It is strange that the ceremony should have been publickly celebrated in the church of Stratford without his knowledge; and the improbability of such a circumstance might lead us to suppose that she was married on the 10th of *April*, about a fortnight after the execution of her father's will. But the entry of the baptism of her first child, (Nov. 23, 1616,) as well as the entry of the marriage, ascertain it to have taken place in February.

Mr. West, without intending it, has impeached the character of this lady; for her first child, according to his representation, must be supposed to have been born some months before her marriage; since among the Baptisms I find this entry of the christening of her eldest son: "1616. Nov. 23. Shakspeare, filius Thomas Quiney,

without children; and Sufanna, who was his favourite, to Dr. John Hall, a physician of good reputation in that country.⁷ She left one child only,

Gent." and according to Mr. West she was not married till the following February. This *Shakspeare Quiney* died in his infancy at Stratford, and was buried May 8th, 1617. Judith's second son, *Richard*, was baptized on February 9th, 1617-18. He died at Stratford in Feb. 1638-9, in the 21st year of his age, and was buried there on the 26th of that month. Her third son, *Thomas*, was baptized August 29, 1619, and was buried also at Stratford, January 28, 1638-9. There had been a plague in the town in the preceding summer, that carried off about fifty persons.

MALONE.

⁷ *Dr. John Hall, a physician of good reputation in that country.* Sufanna's husband, Dr. John Hall, died in Nov, 1635, and is interred in the chancel of the church of Stratford near his wife. He was buried on the 26th of November, as appears from the Register of burials at Stratford:

"November 26, 1635, Johannes Hall, medicus peritissimus."

The following is a transcript of his will, extracted from the Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury:

"The last Will and Testament nuncupative of John Hall of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, Gent. made and declared the five and twentieth of November, 1635. *Imprimis*, I give unto my wife my house in London. *Item*, I give unto my daughter Nash my house in Acton. *Item*, I give unto my daughter Nash my meadow. *Item*, I give my goods and money unto my wife and my daughter Nash, to be equally divided betwixt them. *Item*, concerning my study of books, I leave them, said he, to you, my son Nash, to dispose of them as you see good. As for my manuscripts, I would have given them to Mr. Boles, if he had been here; but forasmuch as he is not here present, you may, son Nash, burn them, or do with them what you please. Witnesses hereunto,

Thomas Nash.

Simon Trapp."

The testator not having appointed any executor, administration was granted to his widow, Nov. 23, 1636.

Some at least of Dr. Hall's manuscripts escaped the flames, one of them being yet extant. See p. 26, n. 9.

I could not, after a very careful search, find the will of Sufanna Hall in the Prerogative-office, nor is it preserved in the Archives of the diocese of Worcester, the Registrar of which diocese at my request very obligingly examined the indexes of all the wills proved

a daughter, who was married first to Thomas Nashe,⁸

in his office between the years 1649 and 1670; but in vain. The town of Stratford-upon-Avon is in that diocese.

The inscriptions on the tomb-stones of our poet's favourite daughter and her husband are as follows :

" Here lyeth the body of John Hall, Gent. he marr. Susanna, ye daughter and co-heire of Will. Shakspeare, Gent. he deceased Nov. 25, A°. 1635, aged 60."

" Hallius hic situs est, medica celeberrimus arte,

" Expectans regni gaudia læta Dei.

" Dignus erat meritis qui Nestora vinceret annis ;

" In terris omnes sed rapit æqua dies.

" Ne tumulo quid desit, adest fidissima conjux,

" Et vitæ comitem nunc quoque mortis habet."

These verses should seem, from the last two lines, not to have been inscribed on Dr. Hall's tomb-stone till 1649. Perhaps indeed the last distich only was then added.

" Here lyeth the body of Susanna, wife to John Hall, Gent. ye daughter of William Shakspeare, Gent. She deceased the 11th of July, A°. 1649, aged 66."

" Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,

" Wise to salvation was good Mistriss Hall.

" Something of Shakspeare was in that, but this

" Wholy of him with whom she's now in blisse.

" Then, passenger, hast ne're a teare,

" To weepe with her that wept with all :

" That wept, yet set her selfe to chere

" Them up with comforts cordiall.

" Her love shall live, her mercy spread,

" When thou hast ne're a teare to shed."

The foregoing English verses, which are preserved by Dugdale, are not now remaining, half of the tomb-stone having been cut away, and another half stone joined to it; with the following inscription on it.—" Here lyeth the body of Richard Watts of Ryhon-Clifford, in the parish of old Stratford, Gent. who departed this life the 23d of May, Anno Dom. 1707, and in the 46th year of his age." This Mr. Watts, as I am informed by the Rev. Mr. Davenport, was owner of, and lived at the estate of Ryhon-Clifford, which was once the property of Dr. Hall.

Mrs. Hall was buried on the 16th of July, 1649, as appears from the Register of Stratford. MALONE.

⁸ *She left one child only, a daughter, who was married first to Thomas Nashe, Esq.*] Elizabeth, our poet's grand-daughter, who appears to have been a favourite, Shakspeare having left her by his will a memorial of his affection, though she at that time was but eight years old, was born in February 1607-8, as appears by an entry in the Register of Stratford, which Mr. West omitted in the transcript with which he furnished Mr. Steevens. I learn from the same register that she was married in 1626: "MARRIAGES. April 22, 1626, Mr. Thomas Nash to Mistris Elizabeth Hall." It should be remembered that every unmarried lady was called *Mistress* till the time of George I. Hence our author's *Mistress* Anne Page. Nor in speaking of an unmarried lady could her christian name be omitted, as it often is at present; for then no distinction would have remained between her and her mother. Some married ladies indeed were distinguished from their daughters by the title of *Madam*.

Mr. Nash died in 1647, as appears by the inscription on his tomb-stone in the chancel of the church of Stratford.

"Here resteth ye body of Thomas Nashe, Esq. He mar. Elizabeth the daugh. and heire of John Hall, Gent. He died April 4th, A^o. 1647, aged 53."

"*Fata manent omnes; hunc non virtute carentem,*

"*Ut neque divitiis, abstulit atra dies.*

"*Abstulit, at referet lux ultima. Siste, viator;*

"*Si peritura paras, per male parta peris.*"

The letters printed in Italicks are now obliterated.

By his last will, which is in the Prerogative-office, dated August 25, 1642, he bequeathed to his well beloved wife, Elizabeth Nash, and her assigns, for her life, (in lieu of jointure and thirds,) one messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, situate in the Chapel-Street in Stratford, then in the tenure and occupation of Joan Norman, widow; one meadow, known by the name of the Square Meadow, with the appurtenances, in the parish of old Stratford, lying near unto the great stone-bridge of Stratford; one other meadow with the appurtenances, known by the name of the Wash Meadow; one little meadow with the appurtenances, adjoining to the said Wash Meadow; and also all the tythes of the manor or lordship of Shottery. He devises to his kinsman Edward Nash, the son of his uncle George Nash of London, his heirs and assigns, (*inter alia*) the messuage or tenement, then in his own occupation, called *The New-Place*, situate in the Chapel-Street, in Stratford; together with all and singular houses, outhouses, barns, stables, orchards, gardens, easements, profits, or commodities, to the same belonging; and also four-yard land of arable land, meadow, and pasture, with the appurtenances, lying and being in the common fields of Old Stratford, with all the easements, profits, commons, commodities, and hereditaments, of the same four-yard lands be-

longing; then in the tenure, use, and occupation of him the said Thomas Nash; and one other messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, situate in the parish of —, in London, and called or known by the name of *The Wardrobe*, and then in the tenure, use and occupation of — Dickes. And from and after the death of his said wife, he bequeaths the meadows above named, and devised to her for life, to his said cousin, Edward Nash, his heirs and assigns for ever. After various other bequests, he directs that one hundred pounds, at the least, be laid out in mourning gowns, cloaks, and apparel, to be distributed among his kindred and friends, in such manner as his executrix shall think fit. He appoints his wife Elizabeth Nash his residuary legatee, and sole executrix, and ordains Edmund Rawlins, William Smith, and John Easton, overseers of his will, to which the witnesses are John Such, Michael Jonson, and Samuel Rawlins.

By a nuncupative codicil dated on the day of his death, April 4th, 1647, he bequeaths (*inter alia*) “to his mother Mrs. Hall fifty pounds; to Elizabeth Hathaway fifty pounds; to Thomas Hathaway fifty pounds; to Judith Hathaway ten pounds; to his uncle Nash and his aunt, his cousin Sadler and his wife, his cousin Richard Quiney and his wife, his cousin Thomas Quiney and his wife, twenty shillings each, to buy them rings.” The meadows which by his will he had devised to his wife for life, he by this codicil devises to her, her heirs and assigns, for ever, to the end that they may not be severed from her own land; and he “appoints and declares that the inheritance of his land given to his cousin Edward Nash should be by him settled after his decease, upon his son Thomas Nash, and his heirs, and for want of such heirs then to remain and descend to his own right heirs.”

It is observable that in this will the testator makes no mention of any child, and there is no entry of any issue of his marriage in the Register of Stratford; I have no doubt therefore that he died without issue, and that a pedigree with which Mr. Whalley furnished Mr. Steevens a few years ago, is inaccurate. The origin of the mistake in that pedigree will be pointed out in its proper place.

As by Shakspeare's will his daughter Susanna had an estate for life in *The New Place*, &c. and his grand-daughter Elizabeth an estate tail in remainder, they probably on the marriage of Elizabeth to Mr. Nash, by a fine and recovery cut off the entail; and by a deed to lead the uses gave him the entire dominion over that estate; which he appears to have misused by devising it from Shakspeare's family to his own.

Mr. Nash's will and codicil were proved June 5, 1647, and administration was then granted to his widow. MALONE.

esq. and afterwards to Sir John Barnard of Abington,⁹ but died likewise without issue.²

⁹ — *Sir John Barnard of Abington,*] Sir John Barnard of Abington, a small village about a mile from the town of Northampton, was created a knight by King Charles II. Nov. 25, 1661. In 1671 he sold the manor and advowson of the church of Abington, which his ancestors had possessed for more than two hundred years, to William Thursby, Esq. Sir John Barnard was the eldest son of Baldwin Barnard, Esq. by Eleanor, daughter and co-heir of John Fulwood of Ford-Hall in the county of Warwick, Esq. and was born in 1605. He first married Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Clement Edmonds of Preston, in Northamptonshire, by whom he had four sons and four daughters. She dying in 1642, he married secondly our poet's grand-daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Nash, on the 5th of June 1649, at Billesley in Warwickshire, about three miles from Stratford-upon-Avon. If any of Shakspeare's manuscripts remained in his grand-daughter's custody at the time of her second marriage, (and some *letters* at least she surely must have had,) they probably were then removed to the house of her new husband at Abington. Sir Hugh Clopton, who was born two years after her death, mentioned to Mr. Macklin, in the year 1742, an old tradition that she had carried away with her from Stratford many of her grandfather's papers. On the death of Sir John Barnard they must have fallen into the hands of Mr. Edward Bagley, Lady Barnard's executor; and if any descendant of that gentleman be now living, in his custody they probably remain. MALONE.

² — *but died likewise without issue.*] Confiding in a pedigree transmitted by Mr. Whalley some years ago to Mr. Steevens, I once supposed that Mr. Rowe was inaccurate in saying that our poet's grand-daughter died without issue. But he was certainly right; and this lady was undoubtedly the last lineal descendant of Shakspeare. There is no entry, as I have already observed, in the Register of Stratford, of any issue of hers by Mr. Nash; nor does he in his will mention any child, devising the greater part of his property between his wife and his kinsman, Edward Nash. That Lady Barnard had no issue by her second husband, is proved by the Register of Abington, in which there is no entry of the baptism of any child of that marriage, though there are regular entries of the time when the several children of Sir John Barnard by his first wife were baptized. Lady Barnard died at Abington, and was buried there on the 17th of February 1669-70; but her husband did not shew his respect for her memory by a monument, or even an inscription of any kind. He seems not to have been sensible of the honour.

This is what I could learn of any note, either

able alliance he had made. Shakspeare's grand-daughter would not, at this day, go to her grave without a memorial. By her last will, which I subjoin, she directs her trustee to sell her estate of *New-Place*, &c. to the best bidder, and to offer it first to her cousin Mr. Edward Nash. How she *then* came to have any property in New-Place, which her first husband had devised to this very Edward Nash, does not appear; but I suppose that after the death of Mr. Thomas Nash she exchanged the patrimonial lands which he bequeathed to her, with Edward Nash and his son, and took New-Place, &c. instead of them.

Sir John Barnard died at Abington, and was buried there on March 5th, 1673-4. On his tomb-stone, in the chancel of the church is the following inscription:

Hic jacent exuviae generosissimi viri Johannis Bernard, militis; patre, avo, abavo, tritavo, aliisque progenitoribus per ducentos et amplius annos hujus oppidi de Abingdon dominis, insignis: qui fato cessit undeseptuagesimo ætatis suæ anno, quinto nonas Martii, annoque a partu B. Virginis, MDCLXXIII.

Sir John Barnard having made no will, administration of his effects was granted on the 7th of November 1674, to Henry Gilbert of Locko in the county of Derby, who had married his daughter Elizabeth by his first wife, and to his two other surviving daughters; Mary Higgs, widow of Thomas Higgs of Colesborne, Esq. and Eleanor Cotton, the wife of Samuel Cotton, Esq. All Sir John Barnard's other children except the three above-mentioned died without issue. I know not whether any descendant of these be now living: but if that should be the case, among their papers may possibly be found some fragment or other relative to Shakspeare; for by his grand-daughter's order, the administrators of her husband were entitled to keep possession of her house, &c. in Stratford, for six months after his death.

The following is a copy of the will of this last descendant of our poet, extracted from the Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury:

In the Name of God, Amen. I Dame Elizabeth Barnard, wife of Sir John Barnard of Abington in the county of Northampton, knight, being in perfect memory, (blessed be God!) and mindful of mortality, do make this my last will and testament in manner and form following.

Whereas by my certain deed or writing under my hand and seal, dated on or about the eighteenth day of April 1653, according to a power therein mentioned, I the said Elizabeth have limited and disposed of all that my messuage with the appurtenances in

relating to himself or family: the character of the man is best seen in his writings. But since Ben

Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, called the New Place, and all that four-yard land and an half in Stratford-Welcombe and Bishopton in the county of Warwick, (after the decease of the said Sir John Barnard, and me the said Elizabeth,) unto Henry Smith of Stratford aforesaid, Gent. and Job Dighton of the Middle Temple, London, Esq. since deceased, and their heirs; upon trust that they, and the survivor, and the heirs of such survivor, should bargain and sell the same for the best value they can get, and the money thereby to be raised to be employed and disposed of to such person and persons, and in such manner as I the said Elizabeth should by any writing or note under my hand, truly testified, declare and nominate; as thereby may more fully appear. Now my will is, and I do hereby signify and declare my mind and meaning to be, that the said Henry Smith, my surviving trustee, or his heirs, shall with all convenient speed after the decease of the said Sir John Barnard my husband, make sale of the inheritance of all and singular the premises, and that my loving cousin Edward Nash, Esq. shall have the first offer or refusal thereof, according to my promise formerly made to him: and the monies to be raised by such sale I do give, dispose of, and appoint the same to be paid and distributed, as is herein after expressed; that is to say, to my cousin Thomas Welles of Carleton, in the county of Bedford, Gent. the sum of fifty pounds, to be paid him within one year next after such sale: and if the said Thomas Wells shall happen to die before such time as his said legacy shall become due to him, then my desire is, that my kinsman Edward Bagley, citizen of London, shall have the sole benefit thereof.

Item, I do give and appoint unto Judith Hathaway, one of the daughters of my kinsman Thomas Hathaway, late of Stratford aforesaid, the annual sum of five pounds of lawful money of England, to be paid unto her yearly and every year, from and after the decease of the survivor of the said Sir John Barnard and me the said Elizabeth, for and during the natural life of her the said Judith, at the two most usual feasts or days of payment in the year, *videlicet*, the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Saint Michael the archangel, by equal portions, the first payment thereof to begin at such of the said feasts as shall next happen, after the decease of the survivor of the said Sir John Barnard and me the said Elizabeth, if the said premises can be so soon sold; or otherwise so soon as the same can be sold: and if the said Judith shall happen to marry, and shall be minded to release the said annual sum of five pounds, and shall accordingly release and quit all her interest and right

Jonson has made a sort of an essay towards it in his *Discoveries*, I will give it in his words:

in and to the same after it shall become due to her, then and in such case, I do give and appoint to her the sum of forty pounds in lieu thereof, to be paid unto her at the time of the executing of such release as aforesaid.

Item, I give and appoint unto Joan the wife of Edward Kent, and one other of the daughters of the said Thomas Hathaway, the sum of fifty pounds, to be likewise paid unto her within one year next after the decease of the survivor of the said Sir John Barnard and me the said Elizabeth, if the said premises can be soon sold, or otherwise so soon as the same can be sold; and if the said Joan shall happen to die before the said fifty pounds shall be paid to her, then I do give and appoint the same unto Edward Kent the younger, her son, to be paid unto him when he shall attain the age of one-and-twenty years.

Item, I do also give and appoint unto him the said Edward Kent, son of the said Joan, the sum of thirty pounds, towards putting him out as an apprentice, and to be paid and disposed of to that use when he shall be fit for it.

Item, I do give or appoint and dispose of unto Rose, Elizabeth, and Susanna, three other of the daughters of my said kinsman Thomas Hathaway, the sum of forty pounds apiece, to be paid unto every of them at such time and in such manner as the said fifty pounds before appointed to the said Joan Kent, their sister, shall become payable.

Item, All the rest of the monies that shall be raised by such sale as aforesaid, I give and dispose of unto my said kinsman Edward Bagley, except five pounds only, which I give and appoint to my said trustee Henry Smith for his pains; and if the said Edward Nash shall refuse the purchase of the said messuage and four-yard land and a half with the appurtenances, then my will and desire is, that the said Henry Smith or his heirs shall sell the inheritance of the said premises and every part thereof unto the said Edward Bagley, and that he shall purchase the same; upon this condition, nevertheless, that he the said Edward Bagley, his heirs, executors, or administrators, shall justly and faithfully perform my will and true meaning, in making due payment of all the several sums of money or legacies before mentioned, in such manner as aforesaid. And I do hereby declare my will and meaning to be that the executors or administrators of my said husband Sir John Barnard shall have and enjoy the use and benefit of my said house in Stratford, called the New-Place, with the orchards, gardens, and all other the appurtenances thereto

“ I remember the players have often mentioned
 “ it as an honour to Shakspeare, that in writing
 “ (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a
 “ line.³ My answer hath been, *Would he had blotted*

belonging, for and during the space of six months next after the decease of him the said Sir John Barnard.

Item, I give and devise unto my kinsman Thomas Hart, the son of Thomas Hart, late of Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, all that my other messuage or inn situate in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, commonly called the Maidenhead, with the appurtenances, and the next house thereunto adjoining, with the barn belonging to the same, now or late in the occupation of Michael Johnson or his assigns, with all and singular the appurtenances; to hold to him the said Thomas Hart the son, and the heirs of his body; and for default of such issue, I give and devise the same to George Hart, brother of the said Thomas Hart, and to the heirs of his body; and for default of such issue to the right heirs of me the said Elizabeth Barnard for ever.

Item, I do make, ordain and appoint my said loving kinsman Edward Bagley sole executor of this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former wills; desiring him to see a just performance hereof, according to my true intent and meaning. In witness whereof I the said Elizabeth Barnard have hereunto set my hand and seal, the nine-and-twentieth day of January, Anno Domini, one thousand six hundred and sixty-nine.

ELIZABETH BARNARD.

Signed, sealed, published, and declared, to be the last will and testament of the said Elizabeth Barnard, in the presence of

John Howes, Rector de Abington.
 Francis Wickes.

Probatum fuit testamentum superscriptum apud ædes Exonienses situat. in le Strand, in comitatu Middx. quarto die mensis Martij, 1669, coram venerabili viro Domino Egidio Sweete, milite et legum doctore, surrogato, &c. juramento Edwardi Bagley, unici executor. nominat. cui, &c. de bene, &c. jurat.

MALONE.

³ ——— *that in writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line.*] This is not true. They only say in their preface to his plays, that “ his mind and hand went together, and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.” On this Mr. Pope observes, that “ there never was a more groundless report, or to the contrary of which

“ a thousand! which they thought a malevolent
 “ speech. I had not told posterity this, but for

there are more undeniable evidences. As, the comedy of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which he entirely new writ; *The History of Henry the Sixth*, which was first published under the title of *The Contention of York and Lancaster*; and that of *Henry V.* extremely improved; that of *Hamlet* enlarged to almost as much again as at first, and many others.”

Surely this is a very strange kind of argument. In the first place this was not a *report*, (unless by that word we are to understand *relation*,) but a positive assertion, grounded on the best evidence that the nature of the subject admitted; namely, ocular proof. The players say, in substance, that Shakspeare had such a happiness of expression, that, as they collect from his papers, he had *seldom* occasion to alter the first words he had set down; in consequence of which they found *scarce* a blot in his writings. And how is this refuted by Mr. Pope? By telling us, that a great many of his plays were *enlarged* by their authour. Allowing this to be true, which is by no means certain, if he had written twenty plays, each consisting of one thousand lines, and afterwards added to each of them a thousand more, would it therefore follow, that he had not written the first thousand with facility and correctness, or that those must have been necessarily *expunged*, because new matter was added to them? Certainly not.—But the truth is, it is by no means clear that our author did enlarge all the plays mentioned by Mr. Pope, if even that would prove the point intended to be established. Mr. Pope was evidently deceived by the quarto copies. From the play of *Henry V.* being more perfect in the folio edition than in the quarto, nothing follows but that the quarto impression of that piece was printed from a mutilated and imperfect copy, stolen from the theatre, or taken down by ear during the representation. What have been called the *quarto* copies of the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry VI.* were in fact two old plays written before the time of Shakspeare, and entitled *The First Part of the Contention of the two houses of Yorke and Lancaster, &c.* and *The true tragedy of Richard Duke of Yorke, &c.* on which he constructed two new plays; just as on the old plays of *King John*, and *The Taming of a Shrew*, he formed two other plays with nearly the same titles. See *The Dissertation* in Vol. X. p. 411.

The tragedy of *Hamlet* in the first edition, (*now extant*,) that of 1604, is said to be “ enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.” What is to be collected from this, but that there was a former *imperfect* edition (I believe, in the year 1602)? that the one we are now speaking of was enlarged

“ their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to
 “ commend their friend by, wherein he most fault-
 “ ed : and to justify mine own candour, for I loved
 “ the man, and do honour his memory, on this side
 “ idolatry, as much as any. He was, indeed, ho-
 “ nest, and of an open and free nature, had an
 “ excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expres-
 “ sions ; wherein he flowed with that facility, that
 “ sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped :
 “ *Sufflaminandus erat*, as Augustus said of Haterius.
 “ His wit was in his own power ; would the rule
 “ of it had been so too. Many times he fell into
 “ those things which could not escape laughter ; as
 “ when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speak-
 “ ing to him,

“ Cæsar thou dost me wrong.

“ He replied :

“ Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause.

to as much again as it was in the former mutilated impression, and that this is the genuine and perfect copy, the other imperfect and spurious ?

The Merry Wives of Windsor, indeed, and *Romeo and Juliet*, and perhaps *Love's Labour's Lost*, our author appears to have altered and amplified ; and to *King Richard II.* what is called the parliament-scene, seems to have been added ; (though this last is by no means certain ;) but neither will these augmentations and new-modellings disprove what has been asserted by Shakspeare's fellow-comedians concerning the facility of his writing, and the exquisite felicity of his first expressions.

The hasty sketch of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which he is said to have composed in a fortnight, he might have written without a blot ; and three or four years afterwards, when he chose to dilate his plan, he might have composed the additional scenes without a blot likewise. In a word, supposing even that Nature had not endowed him with that rich vein which he unquestionably possessed, he who in little more than twenty years produces thirty-four or thirty-five pieces for the stage, has certainly not much time for expunging. MALONE.

“and such like, which were ridiculous. But he
 “redeemed his vices with his virtues: there was
 “ever more in him to be praised than to be par-
 “doned.”

As for the passage which he mentions out of Shakspeare, there is somewhat like it in *Julius Cæsar*, but without the absurdity; nor did I ever meet with it in any edition that I have seen, as quoted by Mr. Jonson.⁴

Besides his plays in this edition, there are two or three ascribed to him by Mr. Langbaine,⁵ which

⁴ — nor did I ever meet with it in any edition that I have seen, as quoted by Mr. Jonson.] See Mr. Tyrwhitt's note, Vol. XII. p. 314, n. 4. MALONE.

⁵ Besides his plays in this edition, there are two or three ascribed to him by Mr. Langbaine,] *The Birth of Merlin*, 1662, written by W. Rowley; the old play of *King John* in two parts, 1591, on which Shakspeare formed his *King John*; and *The Arraignment of Paris*, 1584, written by George Peele.

The editor of the folio 1664, subjoined to the 36 dramas published in 1623, seven plays, four of which had appeared in Shakspeare's life-time with his name in the title-page, viz. *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1609, *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1600, *The London Prodigal*, 1605, and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608; the three others which they inserted, *Locrine*, 1595, *Lord Cromwell*, 1602, and *The Puritan*, 1607, having been printed with the initials W. S. in the title-page, the editor chose to interpret those letters to mean William Shakspeare, and ascribed them also to our poet. I published an edition of these seven pieces some years ago, freed in some measure from the gross errors with which they had been exhibited in ancient copies, that the publick might see what they contained; and do not hesitate to declare my firm persuasion that of *Locrine*, *Lord Cromwell*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *the London Prodigal*, and *The Puritan*, Shakspeare did not write a single line.

How little the booksellers of former times scrupled to affix the names of celebrated writers to the productions of others, even in the life-time of such celebrated authors, may be collected from Heywood's Translations from Ovid, which in 1612, while Shakspeare was yet living, were ascribed to him. See Vol. X. p. 321, n. 1.*

* Mr. Malone's edit. of our author's works, 1790.

I have never seen, and know nothing of. He writ likewise *Venus and Adonis*, and *Tarquin and Lucrece*, in stanzas, which have been printed in a late collection of poems.⁶ As to the character given of him by Ben Jonson, there is a good deal true in it: but I believe it may be as well expressed by what Horace says of the first Romans, who wrote tragedy upon the Greek models, (or indeed translated them,) in his epistle to Augustus:

“ ——— naturâ sublimis & acer :

“ Nam spirat tragicum satis, et feliciter audet,

“ Sed turpem putat in chartis metuitque lituram.”

As I have not proposed to myself to enter into a large and complete criticism upon Shakspeare's works, so I will only take the liberty, with all due submission to the judgment of others, to observe some of those things I have been pleased with in looking him over.

His plays are properly to be distinguished only into comedies and tragedies. Those which are called histories, and even some of his comedies, are really tragedies, with a run or mixture of comedy amongst them.⁷ That way of tragi-comedy was

With the dead they would certainly make still more free. “ This book” (says Anthony Wood, speaking of a work to which the name of Sir Philip Sydney was prefixed) “ *coming out so late*, it is to be inquired whether Sir Philip Sydney's name is not set to it for sale-fake, being a usual thing in these days to set a great name to a book or books, by sharking booksellers, or snivelling writers, to get bread.” *Athen. Oxon.* Vol. I. p. 208. MALONE.

⁶ ——— *in a late collection of poems.*] In the fourth volume of *State Poems*, printed in 1707. Mr. Rowe did not go beyond *A late Collection of Poems*, and does not seem to have known that Shakspeare also wrote 154 Sonnets, and a poem entitled *A Lover's Complaint*. MALONE.

⁷ ——— *are really tragedies, with a run or mixture of comedy amongst them.*] Heywood, our author's contemporary, has stated the best

the common mistake of that age, and is indeed become so agreeable to the English taste, that though

defence that can be made for his intermixing lighter with the more serious scenes of his dramas.

“ It may likewise be objected, why amongst sad and grave histories I have here and there inserted fabulous jests and tales favouring of lightness. I answer, I have therein imitated our *historical, and comical poets*, that write to the stage, who, lest the auditory should be dulled with serious courses, which are merely weighty and material, in every act present some Zany, with his mimick action to breed in the less capable mirth and laughter; *for they that write to all, must strive to please all*. And as such fashion themselves to a multitude diversely addicted, so I to an universality of readers diversely disposed.” Pref. to *History of Women*, 1624. MALONE.

The criticks who renounce tragi-comedy as barbarous, I fear, speak more from notions which they have formed in their closets, than any well-built theory deduced from experience of what pleases or displeases, which ought to be the foundation of all rules.

Even supposing there is no affectation in this refinement, and that those criticks have really tried and purified their minds till there is no dross remaining, still this can never be the case of a popular audience, to which a dramatick representation is referred.

Dryden in one of his prefaces condemns his own conduct in *The Spanish Friar*; but, says he, I did not write it to please myself, it was given to the publick. Here is an involuntary confession that tragi-comedy is more pleasing to the audience; I would ask then, upon what ground it is condemned?

This ideal excellence of uniformity rests upon a supposition that we are either more refined, or a higher order of beings than we really are: there is no provision made for what may be called the animal part of our minds.

Though we should acknowledge this passion for variety and contrarieties to be the vice of our nature, it is still a propensity which we all feel, and which he who undertakes to divert us must find provision for.

We are obliged, it is true, in our pursuit after science, or excellence in any art, to keep our minds steadily fixed for a long continuance; it is a task we impose on ourselves: but I do not wish to task myself in my amusements.

If the great object of the theatre is amusement, a dramatick work must possess every means to produce that effect; if it gives instruction, by the by, so much its merit is the greater; but that is not

the severer criticks among us cannot bear it, yet the generality of our audiences seem to be better pleased with it than with an exact tragedy. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Taming of a Shrew*, are all pure comedy; the rest, however they are called, have something of both kinds. It is not very easy to determine which way of writing he was most excellent in. There is certainly a great deal of entertainment in his comical humours; and though they did not then strike at all ranks of people, as the satire of the present age has taken the liberty to do, yet there is a pleasing and a well-distinguished variety in those characters which he thought fit to meddle with. Falstaff is allowed by every body to be a masterpiece; the character is always well sustained, though drawn out into the length of three plays; and even the account of his death, given by his old landlady Mrs. Quickly, in the first act of *Henry the Fifth*, though it be extremely natural, is yet as diverting as any part of his life. If there be any fault in the draught he has made of this lewd old fellow, it is, that though he has made him a thief, lying, cowardly, vain-glorious, and in short every way vicious, yet he has given him so much wit as to make him almost too agreeable; and I do not know whether some people have not, in remembrance of the diversion he had formerly afforded them, been sorry to see his friend Hal use him so scurvily, when he

its principal object. The ground on which it stands, and which gives it a claim to the protection and encouragement of civilised society, is not because it enforces moral precepts, or gives instruction of any kind; but from the general advantage that it produces, by habituating the mind to find its amusement in intellectual pleasures; weaning it from sensuality, and by degrees filing off, smoothing, and polishing, its rugged corners. SIR J. REYNOLDS.

comes to the crown in the end of *The Second Part of Henry the Fourth*. Amongst other extravagancies, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* he has made him a deer-stealer, that he might at the same time remember his Warwickshire prosecutor, under the name of Justice Shallow; he has given him very near the same coat of arms which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities* of that county, describes for a family there,⁸ and makes the Welsh parson descant very pleasantly upon them. That whole play is admirable; the humours are various and well opposed; the main design, which is to cure Ford of his unreasonable jealousy, is extremely well conducted. In *Twelfth-Night* there is something singularly ridiculous and pleasant in the fantastical steward Malvolio. The parasite and the vain-glorious in Parolles, in *All's Well that Ends Well*, is as good as any thing of that kind in *Plautus* or *Terence*. Petruchio, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, is an uncommon piece of humour. The conversation of Benedick and Beatrice, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and of Rosalind, in *As you like it*, have much wit and sprightliness all along. His clowns, without which character there was hardly any play writ in that time, are all very entertaining: and, I believe, Thermites in *Troilus and Cressida*, and Apemantus in

⁸ ——— the same coat of arms which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of that county, describes for a family there,*] There are two coats, I observe, in Dugdale, where three silver fishes are borne in the name of *Lucy*; and another coat to the monument of Thomas Lucy, son of Sir William Lucy, in which are quartered in four several divisions, twelve little fishes, three in each division, probably *lucies*. This very coat, indeed, seems alluded to in Shallow's giving the dozen white *lucies*, and in Slender's saying *he may quarter*.

Timon, will be allowed to be master-pieces of ill-nature, and satirical snarling. To these I might add, that incomparable character of Shylock the Jew, in *The Merchant of Venice*; but though we have seen that play received and acted as a comedy,⁹ and the part of the Jew performed by an excellent comedian, yet I cannot but think it was designed tragically by the author. There appears in it such a deadly spirit of revenge, such a savage fierceness and fellness, and such a bloody designation of cruelty and mischief, as cannot agree either with the stile or characters of comedy. The play itself, take it altogether, seems to me to be one of the most finished of any of Shakspeare's. The tale indeed, in that part relating to the caskets, and the extravagant and unusual kind of bond given by Antonio, is too much removed from the rules of probability; but taking the fact for granted, we must allow it to be very beautifully written. There is something in the friendship of Antonio to Bassanio very great, generous, and tender. The whole fourth act (supposing, as I said, the fact to be probable) is extremely fine. But there are two passages that deserve a particular notice. The first is, what Portia says in praise of mercy, and the other on the power of musick. The melancholy of Jaques, in

⁹ ——— but though we have seen that play received and acted as a comedy,] In 1701 Lord Lansdown produced his alteration of *The Merchant of Venice*, at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, under the title of *The Jew of Venice*, and expressly calls it a comedy. Shylock was performed by Mr. Dogget. REED.

And such was the bad taste of our ancestors that this piece continued to be a stock-play from 1701 to Feb. 14, 1741, when *The Merchant of Venice* was exhibited for the first time at the theatre in Drury-Lane, and Mr. Macklin made his first appearance in the character of Shylock. MALONE.

As you like it, is as singular and odd as it is diverting. And if, what Horace says,

“Difficile est proprie communia dicere,”

it will be a hard task for any one to go beyond him in the description of the several degrees and ages of man's life, though the thought be old, and common enough.

“ — All the world's a stage,
 “ And all the men and women merely players;
 “ They have their exits and their entrances,
 “ And one man in his time plays many parts,
 “ His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
 “ Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms:
 “ And then, the whining school-boy with his satchel,
 “ And shining morning face, creeping like snail
 “ Unwillingly to school. And then, the lover
 “ Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad
 “ Made to his mistress' eye-brow. Then, a soldier;
 “ Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
 “ Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
 “ Seeking the bubble reputation
 “ Ev'n in the cannon's mouth. And then, the justice;
 “ In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,
 “ With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
 “ Full of wise saws and modern instances;
 “ And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
 “ Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon;
 “ With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;
 “ His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
 “ For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
 “ Turning again tow'rd childish treble, pipes
 “ And whistles in his sound: Last scene of all,
 “ That ends this strange eventful history,
 “ Is second childishness, and mere oblivion;
 “ Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.”

His images are indeed every where so lively, that the thing he would represent stands full before you, and you possess every part of it. I will venture to point out one more, which is, I think, as strong and as uncommon as any thing I ever saw; it is an

image of Patience. Speaking of a maid in love, he says,

“ ——— She never told her love,
 “ But let concealment, like a worm i’ th’ bud,
 “ Feed on her damask cheek: she pin’d in thought,
 “ And fate like *Patience* on a monument,
 “ Smiling at *Grief*.”

What an image is here given! and what a task would it have been for the greatest masters of Greece and Rome to have expressed the passions designed by this sketch of statuary! The stile of his comedy is, in general, natural to the characters, and easy in itself; and the wit most commonly sprightly and pleasing, except in those places where he runs into doggerel rhimes, as in *The Comedy of Errors*, and some other plays. As for his jingling sometimes, and playing upon words, it was the common vice of the age he lived in: and if we find it in the pulpit, made use of as an ornament to the sermons of some of the gravest divines of those times, perhaps it may not be thought too light for the stage.

But certainly the greatness of this author’s genius does no where so much appear, as where he gives his imagination an entire loose, and raises his fancy to a flight above mankind, and the limits of the visible world. Such are his attempts in *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*. Of these, *The Tempest*, however it comes to be placed the first by the publishers of his works, can never have been the first written by him: it seems to me as perfect in its kind, as almost any thing we have of his. One may observe, that the unities are kept here, with an exactness uncommon to the liberties of his writing; though that was what, I suppose, he valued himself least upon, since

his excellencies were all of another kind. I am very sensible that he does, in this play, depart too much from that likeness to truth which ought to be observed in these sort of writings; yet he does it so very finely, that one is easily drawn in to have more faith for his sake, than reason does well allow of. His magick has something in it very solemn, and very poetical: and that extravagant character of Caliban is mighty well sustained, shews a wonderful invention in the author, who could strike out such a particular wild image, and is certainly one of the finest and most uncommon grotesques that ever was seen. The observation, which, I have been informed, three very great men concurred in making² upon this part, was extremely just; that *Shakspeare had not only found out a new character in his Caliban, but had also devised and adapted a new manner of language for that character.*

It is the same magick that raises the Fairies in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the Witches in *Macbeth*, and the Ghost in *Hamlet*, with thoughts and language so proper to the parts they sustain, and so peculiar to the talent of this writer. But of the two last of these plays I shall have occasion to take notice, among the tragedies of Mr. Shakspeare. If one undertook to examine the greatest part of these by those rules which are established by Aristotle, and taken from the model of the Grecian stage, it would be no very hard task to find a great many

² ——— which, I have been informed, three very great men concurred in making ———] Lord Falkland, Lord C. J. Vaughan, and Mr. Selden. ROWE.

Dryden was of the same opinion. "His person" (says he, speaking of Caliban,) "is monstrous, as he is the product of unnatural lust, and *his language is as hobgoblin as his person*: in all things he is distinguished from other mortals." Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*. MALONE.

faults; but as Shakspeare lived under a kind of mere light of nature, and had never been made acquainted with the regularity of those written precepts, so it would be hard to judge him by a law he knew nothing of. We are to consider him as a man that lived in a state of almost universal licence and ignorance: there was no established judge, but every one took the liberty to write according to the dictates of his own fancy. When one considers, that there is not one play before him of a reputation good enough to entitle it to an appearance on the present stage, it cannot but be a matter of great wonder that he should advance dramatick poetry so far as he did. The fable is what is generally placed the first, among those that are reckoned the constituent parts of a tragick or heroick poem; not, perhaps, as it is the most difficult or beautiful, but as it is the first properly to be thought of in the contrivance and course of the whole; and with the fable ought to be considered the fit disposition, order, and conduct of its several parts. As it is not in this province of the drama that the strength and mastery of Shakspeare lay, so I shall not undertake the tedious and ill-natured trouble to point out the several faults he was guilty of in it. His tales were seldom invented, but rather taken either from the true history, or novels and romances: and he commonly made use of them in that order, with those incidents, and that extent of time in which he found them in the authors from whence he borrowed them. So *The Winter's Tale*, which is taken from an old book, called *The Delectable History of Dorastus and Fawnia*, contains the space of sixteen or seventeen years, and the scene is sometimes laid in Bohemia, and sometimes in Sicily, according to the original order of the story. Almost all his historical plays comprehend a great

length of time, and very different and distinct places: and in his *Antony and Cleopatra*, the scene travels over the greatest part of the Roman empire. But in recompence for his carelessness in this point, when he comes to another part of the drama, *the manners of his characters, in acting or speaking what is proper for them, and fit to be shewn by the poet*, he may be generally justified, and in very many places greatly commended. For those plays which he has taken from the English or Roman history, let any man compare them, and he will find the character as exact in the poet as the historian. He seems indeed so far from proposing to himself any one action for a subject, that the title very often tells you, it is *The Life of King John, King Richard, &c.* What can be more agreeable to the idea our historians give of *Henry the Sixth*, than the picture Shakspeare has drawn of him! His manners are every where exactly the same with the story; one finds him still described with simplicity, passive sanctity, want of courage, weakness of mind, and easy submission to the governance of an imperious wife, or prevailing faction: though at the same time the poet does justice to his good qualities, and moves the pity of his audience for him, by shewing him pious, disinterested, a contemner of the things of this world, and wholly resigned to the severest dispensations of God's providence. There is a short scene in *The Second Part of Henry the Sixth*, which I cannot but think admirable in its kind. Cardinal Beaufort, who had murdered the Duke of Gloucester, is shewn in the last agonies on his death-bed, with the good king praying over him. There is so much terror in one, so much tenderness and moving piety in the other, as must touch any one who is capable either of fear or pity. In his *Henry the Eighth*, that prince is drawn with that greatness of mind, and all those

good qualities which are attributed to him in any account of his reign. If his faults are not shewn in an equal degree, and the shades in this picture do not bear a just proportion to the lights, it is not that the artist wanted either colours or skill in the disposition of them; but the truth, I believe, might be, that he forbore doing it out of regard to queen Elizabeth, since it could have been no very great respect to the memory of his mistress, to have exposed some certain parts of her father's life upon the stage. He has dealt much more freely with the minister of that great king; and certainly nothing was ever more justly written, than the character of Cardinal Wolsey. He has shewn him insolent in his prosperity; and yet, by a wonderful address, he makes his fall and ruin the subject of general compassion. The whole man, with his vices and virtues, is finely and exactly described in the second scene of the fourth act. The distresses likewise of Queen Katharine, in this play, are very movingly touched; and though the art of the poet has screened King Henry from any gross imputation of injustice, yet one is inclined to wish, the Queen had met with a fortune more worthy of her birth and virtue. Nor are the manners, proper to the persons represented, less justly observed, in those characters taken from the Roman history; and of this, the fierceness and impatience of Coriolanus, his courage and disdain of the common people, the virtue and philosophical temper of Brutus, and the irregular greatness of mind in M. Antony, are beautiful proofs. For the two last especially, you find them exactly as they are described by Plutarch, from whom certainly Shakspeare copied them. He has indeed followed his original pretty close, and taken in several little incidents that might have been spared in a play. But, as I hinted before, his

design seems most commonly rather to describe those great men in the several fortunes and accidents of their lives, than to take any single great action, and form his work simply upon that. However, there are some of his pieces, where the fable is founded upon one action only. Such are more especially, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*. The design in *Romeo and Juliet* is plainly the punishment of their two families, for the unreasonable feuds and animosities that had been so long kept up between them, and occasioned the effusion of so much blood. In the management of this story, he has shewn something wonderfully tender and passionate in the love-part, and very pitiful in the distress. *Hamlet* is founded on much the same tale with the *Electra* of *Sophocles*. In each of them a young prince is engaged to revenge the death of his father, their mothers are equally guilty, are both concerned in the murder of their husbands,* and are afterwards married to the murderers. There is in the first part of the Greek tragedy something very moving in the grief of *Electra*; but, as Mr. Dacier has observed, there is something very unnatural and shocking in the manners he has given that Princess and *Orestes* in the latter part. *Orestes* imbrues his hands in the blood of his own mother; and that barbarous action is performed, though not immediately upon the stage, yet so near, that the audience hear *Clytemnestra* crying out to *Ægysthus* for help, and to her son for mercy: while *Electra* her daughter, and a Princess, (both of them characters that ought to have appeared with more

* — are both concerned in the murder of their husbands,] It does not appear that *Hamlet's* mother was concerned in the death of her husband. MALONE.

decency,) stands upon the stage, and encourages her brother in the parricide. What horror does this not raise! Clytemnestra was a wicked woman, and had deserved to die; nay, in the truth of the story, she was killed by her own son; but to represent an action of this kind on the stage, is certainly an offence against those rules of manners proper to the persons, that ought to be observed there. On the contrary, let us only look a little on the conduct of Shakspeare. Hamlet is represented with the same piety towards his father, and resolution to revenge his death, as Orestes; he has the same abhorrence for his mother's guilt, which, to provoke him the more, is heightened by incest: but it is with wonderful art and justness of judgment, that the poet restrains him from doing violence to his mother. To prevent any thing of that kind, he makes his father's Ghost forbid that part of his vengeance:

“ But howsoever thou pursu’st this act,
 “ Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 “ Against thy mother aught; leave her to heav’n,
 “ And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 “ To prick and sting her.”

This is to distinguish rightly between *horror* and *terror*. The latter is a proper passion of tragedy, but the former ought always to be carefully avoided. And certainly no dramatick writer ever succeeded better in raising *terror* in the minds of an audience than Shakspeare has done. The whole tragedy of *Macbeth*, but more especially the scene where the King is murdered, in the second act, as well as this play, is a noble proof of that manly spirit with which he writ; and both shew how powerful he was, in giving the strongest motions to our souls that they are capable of. I cannot leave

Hamlet, without taking notice of the advantage with which we have seen this master-piece of Shakspeare distinguish itself upon the stage, by Mr. Betterton's fine performance of that part. A man, who, though he had no other good qualities, as he has a great many, must have made his way into the esteem of all men of letters, by this only excellency. No man is better acquainted with Shakspeare's manner of expression, and indeed he has studied him so well, and is so much a master of him, that whatever part of his he performs, he does it as if it had been written on purpose for him, and that the author had exactly conceived it as he plays it. I must own a particular obligation to him, for the most considerable part of the passages relating to this life, which I have here transmitted to the publick; his veneration for the memory of Shakspeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire, on purpose to gather up what remains he could, of a name for which he had so great a veneration.⁴

⁴ ——— of a name for which he had so great a veneration.] Mr. Betterton was born in 1635, and had many opportunities of collecting information relative to Shakspeare, but unfortunately the age in which he lived was not an age of curiosity. Had either he or Dryden or Sir William D'Avenant taken the trouble to visit our poet's youngest daughter, who lived till 1662, or his grand-daughter, who did not die till 1670, many particulars might have been preserved which are now irrecoverably lost. Shakspeare's sister, Joan Hart, who was only five years younger than him, died at Stratford in Nov. 1646, at the age of seventy-six; and from her undoubtedly his two daughters, and his grand-daughter Lady Barnard, had learned several circumstances of his early history antecedent to the year 1600. MALONE.

This *Account of the Life of Shakspeare* is printed from Mr. Rowe's second edition, in which it had been abridged and altered by himself after its appearance in 1709. STEEVENS.

To the foregoing Accounts of SHAKSPEARE'S LIFE, I have only one Passage to add, which Mr. Pope related, as communicated to him by Mr. Rowe.

IN the time of Elizabeth, coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play,⁵ and when Shakspeare fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the playhouse, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man as he alighted called for Will. Shakspeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will. Shakspeare could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. Shakspeare, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when Will. Shakspeare was summoned, were im-

⁵ — *Many came on horseback to the play,*] Plays were at this time performed in the afternoon. “The pollicie of plaies is very necessary, howsoever some shallow-brained censurers (not the deepest searchers into the secrets of government) mightily oppugne them. For whereas *the afternoon* being the idlest time of the day wherein men that are their own masters (as gentlemen of the court, the innes of the court, and a number of captains and soldiers about London) do wholly bestow themselves upon pleasure, and that pleasure they divide (how vertuously it skills not) either in gaming, following of harlots, drinking, or seeing a play, is it not better (since of four extreames all the world cannot keepe them but they will choose one) that they should betake them to the least, which is plaies?” Nash’s *Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Devil*, 1592.

mediately to present themselves, *I am Shakspeare's boy, Sir.* In time Shakspeare found higher employment: but as long as the practice of riding to the playhouse continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of, *Shakspeare's boys.*⁶ JOHNSON.

⁶ ——— *the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of Shakspeare's boys.*] I cannot dismiss this anecdote without observing that it seems to want every mark of probability. Though Shakspeare quitted Stratford on account of a juvenile irregularity, we have no reason to suppose that he had forfeited the protection of his father who was engaged in a lucrative business, or the love of his wife who had already brought him two children, and was herself the daughter of a substantial yeoman. It is unlikely therefore, when he was beyond the reach of his prosecutor, that he should conceal his plan of life, or place of residence, from those who, if he found himself distressed, could not fail to afford him such supplies as would have set him above the necessity of *holding horses* for subsistence. Mr. Malone has remarked in his *Attempt to ascertain the Order in which the Plays of Shakspeare were written*, that he might have found an easy introduction to the stage; for Thomas Green, a celebrated comedian of that period, was his townsman, and perhaps his relation. The genius of our author prompted him to write poetry; his connection with a player might have given his productions a dramatick turn; or his own sagacity might have taught him that fame was not incompatible with profit, and that the theatre was an avenue to both. That it was once the general custom to ride on horse-back to the play, I am likewise yet to learn. The most popular of the theatres were on the Bankside; and we are told by the satirical pamphleteers of the time, that the usual mode of conveyance to these places of amusement, was by water: but not a single writer so much as hints at the custom of riding to them, or at the practice of having horses held during the hours of exhibition. Some allusion to this usage (if it had existed) must, I think, have been discovered in the course of our researches after contemporary fashions. Let it be remembered too, that we receive this tale on no higher authority than that of Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*, Vol. I. p. 130. "Sir William Davenant told it to Mr. Betterton, who communicated it to Mr. Rowe," who (according to Dr. Johnson) related it to Mr. Pope. Mr. Rowe (if this intelligence be authentic) seems to have concurred with me in opinion, as he forebore to introduce a circumstance so incredible into his life of Shakspeare. As to the book which furnishes the anecdote, not the smallest part

Mr. Rowe has told us that he derived the principal anecdotes in his account of Shakspeare, from Betterton the player, whose zeal had induced him to visit Stratford for the sake of procuring all possible intelligence concerning a poet to whose works he might justly think himself under the strongest obligations. Notwithstanding this assertion, in the manuscript papers of the late Mr. Oldys it is said, that one Boman (according to Chetwood, p. 143, "an actor more than half an age on the London theatres") was unwilling to allow that his associate and contemporary Betterton had ever undertaken such a journey.⁷ Be this matter as it will, the

of it was the composition of Mr. Cibber, being entirely written by a Mr. Shiells, amanuensis to Dr. Johnson, when his Dictionary was preparing for the press. T. Cibber was in the King's Bench, and accepted of ten guineas from the booksellers for leave to prefix his name to the work; and it was purposely so prefixed as to leave the reader in doubt whether himself or his father was the person designed.

The foregoing anecdote relative to *Cibber's Lives &c.* I received from Dr. Johnson. See, however, *The Monthly Review* for December 1781, p. 409. STEEVENS.

Mr. Steevens in one particular is certainly mistaken. To the theatre in Blackfriars I have no doubt that many gentlemen rode in the time of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. From the Strand, Holborn, Bishopsgate-street, &c. where many of the nobility lived, they could indeed go no other way than on foot, or on horseback, or in coaches; and coaches till after the death of Elizabeth were extremely rare. Many of the gentry therefore certainly went to that playhouse on horseback. See the proofs, in the Essay above referred to.

This however will not establish the tradition relative to our author's first employment at the playhouse, which stands on a very slender foundation. MALONE.

⁷ — it is said, that one Boman—was unwilling to allow that his associate and contemporary Betterton had ever undertaken such a journey.] This assertion of Mr. Oldys is altogether unworthy of credit. Why any doubt should be entertained concerning Mr. Betterton's having visited Stratford, after Rowe's positive assertion that he did

following particulars, which I shall give in the words of Oldys, are, for aught we know to the contrary, as well authenticated as any of the anecdotes delivered down to us by Rowe.

Mr. Oldys had covered several quires of paper with laborious collections for a regular life of our author. From these I have made the following extracts, which (however trivial) contain the only circumstances that wear the least appearance of novelty or information; the song in p. 6 excepted.

“ If tradition may be trusted, Shakspeare often baited at the Crown Inn or Tavern in Oxford, in his journey to and from London. The landlady was a woman of great beauty and sprightly wit; and her husband, Mr. John Davenant, (afterwards mayor of that city,) a grave melancholy man; who, as well as his wife, used much to delight in Shakspeare’s pleasant company. Their son young Will

so, it is not easy to conceive. Mr. Rowe did not go there himself; and how could he have collected the few circumstances relative to Shakspeare and his family, which he has told, if he had not obtained information from some friend who examined the Register of the parish of Stratford, and made personal inquiries on the subject?

“ Boman,” we are told, “ was unwilling to *believe*,” &c. But the fact disputed did not require any exercise of his *belief*. Mr. Boman was married to the daughter of Sir Francis Watson, Bart. the gentleman with whom Betterton joined in an adventure to the East Indies, whose name the writer of Betterton’s Life in *Biographia Britannica* has so studiously concealed. By that unfortunate scheme Betterton lost above 2000l. Dr. Ratcliffe 6000l. and Sir Francis Watson his whole fortune. On his death soon after the year 1692, Betterton generously took his daughter under his protection, and educated her in his house. Here Boman married her; from which period he continued to live in the most friendly correspondence with Mr. Betterton, and must have *known* whether he went to Stratford or not. MALONE.

66 ADDITIONAL ANECDOTES

Davenant (afterwards Sir William) was then a little school-boy in the town, of about seven or eight years old,⁸ and so fond also of Shakspeare, that whenever he heard of his arrival, he would fly from school to see him. One day an old townsman observing the boy running homeward almost out of breath, asked him whither he was posting in that heat and hurry. He answered, to see his god-father Shakspeare. There's a good boy, said the other, but have a care that you don't take God's name in vain. This story Mr. Pope told me at the Earl of Oxford's table, upon occasion of some discourse which arose about Shakspeare's monument then newly erected in Westminster Abbey ;⁹

⁸ ——— of about seven or eight years old,] He was born at Oxford in February, 1605-6. MALONE.

⁹ ——— Shakspeare's monument then newly erected in Westminster-Abbey;] "This monument," says Mr. Granger, "was erected in 1741, by the direction of the Earl of Burlington, Dr. Mead, Mr. Pope, and Mr. Martyn. Mr. Fleetwood and Mr. Rich gave each of them a benefit towards it, from one of Shakspeare's own plays. It was executed by H. Scheemaker, after a design of Kent.

"On the monument is inscribed—*amor publicus posuit*. Dr. Mead objected to *amor publicus*, as not occurring in old classical inscriptions; but Mr. Pope and the other gentlemen concerned insisting that it should stand, Dr. Mead yielded the point, saying,

'*Omnia vincit amor, nos et cedamus amori.*'

"This anecdote was communicated by Dr. Lort, late Greek Professor of Cambridge, who had it from Dr. Mead himself."

It was recorded at the time in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for Feb. 1741, by a writer who objects to every part of the inscription, and says it ought to have been, "*G. S. centum viginti et quatuor post obitum annis populus plaudens [aut favens] posuit.*"

The monument was opened Jan. 29, 1741. Scheemaker is said to have got 300l. for his work. The performers at each house, much to their honour, performed *gratis*; and the dean and chapter of Westminster took nothing for the ground. The money received by the performance at Drury-Lane, amounted to above 200l. the receipts at Covent-Garden to about 100l. These particulars I learn from Oldys's MS. notes on Langbaine.

and he quoted Mr. Betterton the player for his authority. I answered, that I thought such a story might have enriched the variety of those choice fruits of observation he has presented us in his preface to the edition he had published of our poet's works. He replied—"There might be in the garden of mankind such plants as would seem to pride themselves more in a regular production of their own native fruits, than in having the repute of bearing a richer kind by grafting; and this was the reason he omitted it."²

The scroll on the monument, as I learn from a letter to my father, dated June 27, 1741, remained for some time after the monument was set up, without any inscription on it. This was a challenge to the wits of the time; which one of them accepted by writing a copy of verses, the subject of which was a conversation supposed to pass between Dr. Mead and Sir Thomas Hanmer, relative to the filling up of the scroll. I know not whether they are in print, and I do not choose to quote them all. The introductory lines, however, run thus:

"To learned Mead thus Hanmer spoke,
 "Doctor, this empty scroll's a joke.
 "Something it doubtless should contain,
 "Extremely short, extremely plain;
 "But wondrous deep, and wondrous pat,
 "And fit for Shakspeare to point at;" &c. MALONE.

At Drury-Lane was acted *Julius Cæsar*, 28 April 1738, when a prologue written by Benjamin Martyn, Esq. was spoken by Mr. Quin, and an epilogue by James Noel, Esq. spoken by Mrs. Porter. Both these are printed in *The General Dictionary*. At Covent-Garden was acted *Hamlet*, 10th April 1739, when a prologue written by Mr. Theobald, and printed in the *London Magazine* of that year, was spoken by Mr. Ryan. In the newspaper of the day it was observed that this last representation was far from being numerously attended. REED.

² ——— and this was the reason he omitted it.] Mr. Oldys might have added, that he was the person who suggested to Mr. Pope the singular course which he pursued in his edition of Shakspeare. "Remember," says Oldys in a MS. note to his copy of Langbaine, Article, *Shakspeare*, "what I observed to my Lord Oxford for Mr. Pope's use, out of Cowley's preface." The observation here

68 ADDITIONAL ANECDOTES

The same story, without the names of the persons, is printed among the jests of John Taylor the Water poet, in his works, folio, 1630, p. 184, N^o 39: and, with some variations, may be found in one of Hearne's pocket books.³

alluded to, I believe, is one made by Cowley in his preface, p. 53. edit. 1710, 8vo. "This has been the case with Shakspeare, Fletcher, Jonson, and many others, part of whose poems I should presume to take the boldness to *prune and lop away*, if the care of *replanting them in print* did belong to me; neither would I make any scruple to cut off from some the unnecessary young suckers, and from others the old withered branches; for a great wit is no more tied to live in a vast volume, than in a gigantick body; on the contrary it is commonly more vigorous the less space it animates, and as Statius says of little Tydeus,

"——— totos infusa per artus,

"Major in exiguo regnabat corpore virtus."

Pope adopted this very unwarrantable idea; striking out from the text of his author whatever he did not like: and Cowley himself has suffered a sort of poetical punishment for having suggested it, the learned Bishop of Worcester [Dr. Hurd] having *pruned and lopped away* his beautiful luxuriances, as Pope, on Cowley's suggestion, did those of Shakspeare. MALONE.

³ *The same story—may be found in one of Hearne's pocket books.* Antony Wood is the first and original author of the anecdote that Shakspeare, in his journies from Warwickshire to London, used to bait at the Crown-inn on the west side of the corn market in Oxford. He says, that D'Avenant the poet was born in that house in 1606. "His father (he adds) John Davenant, was a sufficient vintner, kept the tavern now known by the sign of the *Crown*, and was mayor of the said city in 1621. His mother was a very beautiful woman, of a good wit and conversation, in which she was imitated by none of her children but by this *William* [the poet.] The father, who was a very grave and discreet citizen, (yet an admirer and lover of plays and play-makers, especially *Shakspeare*, who frequented his house in his journies between Warwickshire and London,) was of a melancholick disposition, and was seldom or never seen to laugh, in which he was imitated by none of his children but by Robert his eldest son, afterwards fellow of St. John's college, and a venerable Doctor of Divinity." *Wood's Ath. Oxon.* Vol. II. p. 292, edit. 1692. I will not suppose that Shakspeare could have been the father of a Doctor of Divinity who never laughed: but it was always a constant tradition in Oxford

“ One of Shakspeare’s younger brothers,⁴ who lived to a good old age, even some years, as I

that Shakspeare was the father of Davenant the poet. And I have seen this circumstance expressly mentioned in some of Wood’s papers. Wood was well qualified to know these particulars; for he was a townsman of Oxford, where he was born in 1632. Wood says, that Davenant went to school in Oxford. *Ubi supr.*

As to the *Crown-Inn*, it still remains as an inn, and is an old decayed house, but probably was once a principal inn in Oxford. It is directly in the road from Stratford to London. In a large upper room, which seems to have been a sort of *Hall* for entertaining a large company, or for accommodating (as was the custom) different parties at once, there was a bow-window, with three pieces of excellent painted glass. About eight years ago, I remember visiting this room, and proposing to purchase of the landlord the painted glass, which would have been a curiosity as coming from Shakspeare’s inn. But going thither soon after, I found it was removed; the inn-keeper having communicated my intended bargain to the owner of the house, who began to suspect that he was possessed of a curiosity too valuable to be parted with, or to remain in such a place: and I never could hear of it afterwards. If I remember right, the painted glass consisted of three armorial shields beautifully stained. I have said so much on this subject, because I think that Shakspeare’s old hostelry at Oxford deserves no less respect than Chaucer’s Tabarde in Southwark.

T. WARTON.

⁴ *One of Shakspeare’s younger brothers, &c.]* Mr. Oldys seems to have studied the art of “marring a plain tale in the telling of it;” for he has in this story introduced circumstances which tend to diminish, instead of adding to, its credibility. *Male dum recitas, incipit esse tuus.* From Shakspeare’s not taking notice of any of his brothers or sisters in his will, except Joan Hart, I think it highly probable they were all dead in 1616, except her, at least all those of the whole blood; though in the Register there is no entry of the burial of either his brother Gilbert, or Edmund, antecedent to the death of Shakspeare, or at any subsequent period.

The truth is, that this account of our poet’s having performed the part of an old man in one of his own comedies, came originally from Mr. Thomas Jones, of Tarbick, in Worcestershire, who has been already mentioned, (see p. 6, n. 7.) and who related it from the information, not of one of Shakspeare’s *brothers*, but of a *relation* of our poet, who lived to a good old age, and who had seen him act in his youth. Mr. Jones’s informer might have been

compute, after the restoration of *King Charles II.* would in his younger days come to London to visit his brother *Will*, as he called him, and be a spectator of him as an actor in some of his own plays. This custom, as his brother's fame enlarged, and his dramattick entertainments grew the greatest support of our principal, if not of all our theatres, he continued it seems so long after his brother's death, as even to the latter end of his own life. The curiosity at this time of the most noted actors [exciting them] to learn something from him of his brother, &c. they justly held him in the highest veneration. And it may be well believed, as there was besides a kinsman and descendant of the family, who was then a celebrated actor among them, [*Charles Hart.*⁵ See Shakspeare's Will.] this

Mr. Richard Quiney, who lived in London, and died at Stratford in 1656, at the age of 69; or Mr. Thomas Quiney, our poet's son-in-law, who lived, I believe, till 1663, and was twenty-seven years old when his father-in-law died; or some one of the family of Hathaway. Mr. Thomas Hathaway, I believe Shakspeare's brother-in-law, died at Stratford in 1654-5, at the age of 85.

There was a Thomas Jones an inhabitant of Stratford, who between the years 1581 and 1590 had four sons, Henry, James, Edmund, and Isaac: some one of these, it is probable, settled at Tarbick, and was the father of Thomas Jones, the relater of this anecdote, who was born about the year 1613.

If any of Shakspeare's brothers lived till after the Restoration, and visited the players, why were we not informed to what player he related it, and from what player Mr. Oldys had his account? The fact, I believe, is, he had it not from a player, but from the above-mentioned Mr. Jones, who likewise communicated the stanza of the ballad on Sir Thomas Lucy, which has been printed in a former page. MALONE.

⁵ — *Charles Hart.*] Mr. Charles Hart the player was born, I believe, about the year 1630, and died in or about 1682. If he was a grandson of Shakspeare's sister, he was probably the son of Michael Hart, her youngest son, of whose marriage or death there is no account in the parish Register of Stratford, and therefore I suspect he settled in London. MALONE.

opportunity made them greedily inquisitive into every little circumstance, more especially in his dramattick character, which his brother could relate of him. But he, it seems, was so stricken in years, and possibly his memory so weakened with infirmities, (which might make him the easier pass for a man of weak intellects,) that he could give them but little light into their inquiries; and all that could be recollected from him of his brother *Will* in that station was, the faint, general, and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company, who were eating, and one of them sung a song." See the character of *Adam*, in *As you like it*, Act II. sc. ult.

"Verses by Ben Jonson and Shakspeare, occasioned by the motto to the Globe Theatre—*Totus mundus agit histrionem*.

Jonson.

- ' If, but *stage actors*, all the world displays,
- ' Where shall we find *spectators* of their plays?"

Shakspeare.

- ' Little, or much, of what we see, we do;
- ' We are all both *actors* and *spectators* too.'

Poetical Characteristicks, 8vo. MS. Vol. I. some time in the Harleian Library; which volume was returned to its owner."

"Old Mr. Boman the player reported from Sir William Bishop, that some part of Sir John Fal-

staff's character was drawn from a townsman of Stratford, who either faithlessly broke a contract, or spitefully refused to part with some land for a valuable consideration, adjoining to Shakspeare's, in or near that town."

To these anecdotes I can only add the following.

At the conclusion of the advertisement prefixed to Lintot's edition of Shakspeare's Poems, it is said, "That most learned prince and great patron of learning, King James the First, was pleased with his own hand to write an amicable letter to Mr. Shakspeare; which letter, though now lost, remained long in the hands of Sir William D'Avenant,"⁶ as a credible person now living can testify."

Mr. Oldys, in a MS. note to his copy of Fuller's *Worthies*, observes, that "the story came from the Duke of Buckingham, who had it from Sir William D'Avenant."

It appears from *Roscius Anglicanus*, (commonly called Downes the prompter's book,) 1708, that Shakspeare took the pains to instruct Joseph Taylor in the character of *Hamlet*, and John Lowine in that of *King Henry VIII.* STEEVENS.

The late Mr. Thomas Osborne, bookseller, (whose exploits are celebrated by the author of the *Dunciad*) being ignorant in what form or language our *Para-*

⁶ ——— which letter, though now lost, remained long in the hands of Sir William D'Avenant,] Dr. Farmer with great probability supposes that this letter was written by King James in return for the compliment paid to him in *Macbeth*. The relater of this anecdote was *Sheffield* Duke of Buckingham. MALONE.

dise Lost was written, employed one of his garret-teers to render it from a French translation into English prose. Lest, hereafter, the compositions of Shakspeare should be brought back into their native tongue from the version of Monsieur le Comte de Catuelan, le Tourneur, &c. it may be necessary to observe, that all the following particulars, extracted from the preface of these gentlemen, are as little founded in truth as their description of the ridiculous Jubilee at Stratford, which they have been taught to represent as an affair of general approbation and national concern.

They say, that Shakspeare came to London without a plan, and finding himself at the door of a theatre, instinctively stopped there, and offered himself to be a holder of horses:—that he was remarkable for his excellent performance of the Ghost in *Hamlet*:—that he borrowed nothing from preceding writers:—that all on a sudden he left the stage, and returned without eclat into his native country:—that his monument at Stratford is of copper:—that the courtiers of James I. paid several compliments to him which are still preserved:—that he relieved a widow, who, together with her numerous family, was involved in a ruinous lawsuit:—that his editors have restored many passages in his plays, by the assistance of the manuscripts he left behind him, &c. &c.

Let me not however forget the justice due to these ingenious Frenchmen, whose skill and fidelity in the execution of their very difficult undertaking, is only exceeded by such a display of candour as would serve to cover the imperfections of much less elegant and judicious writers. STEEVENS.

BAPTISMS, MARRIAGES, and BURIALS, of the Shakspeare family; transcribed from the Register-books of the Parish of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.⁷

JONE,⁸ daughter of John Shakspeare, was baptized Sept. 15, 1558.

Margaret, daughter of John Shakspeare, was buried April 30, 1563.

WILLIAM, son of John Shakspeare, was baptized April 26, 1564.⁹

Johanna, daughter of Richard Hathaway, otherwise Gardiner, of Shottery,² was baptized May 9, 1566.

Gilbert, son of John Shakspeare, was baptized Oct. 13, 1566.

Jone,³ daughter of John Shakspeare, was baptized April 15, 1569.

⁷ An inaccurate and very imperfect list of the baptisms, &c. of Shakspeare's family was transmitted by Mr. West about eighteen years ago to Mr. Steevens. The list now printed I have extracted with great care from the Registers of Stratford; and I trust, it will be found correct. MALONE.

⁸ This lady Mr. West supposed to have married the ancestor of the Harts of Stratford; but he was certainly mistaken. She died probably in her infancy. The wife of Mr. Hart was undoubtedly the *second* Jone, mentioned below. Her son Michael was born in the latter end of the year 1608, at which time she was above thirty-nine years old. The elder Jone would then have been near fifty.

MALONE.

⁹ He was born three days before, April 23, 1564. MALONE.

² This Richard Hathaway of Shottery was probably the father of *Anne Hathaway*, our poet's wife. There is no entry of her baptism, the Register not commencing till 1558, two years after she was born. Thomas, the son of this Richard Hathaway, was baptized at Stratford, April 12, 1569; John, another son, Feb. 3, 1574; and William, another son, Nov. 30, 1578. MALONE.

³ It was common in the age of Queen Elizabeth to give the same christian name to two children successively. (Thus, Mr. Sadler,

Anne, daughter of Mr. John Shakspeare, was baptized Sept. 28, 1571.

Richard, son of Mr. John Shakspeare, was baptized March 11, 1573. [1573-4.]

Anne, daughter of Mr. John Shakspeare, was buried April 4, 1579.

Edmund, son of Mr. John Shakspeare, was baptized May 3, 1580.

Sufanna, daughter of WILLIAM SHAKSPERE, was baptized May 26, 1583.

Elizabeth, daughter of Anthony Shakspeare, of Hampton,⁴ was baptized Feb. 10, 1583. [1583-4.]

John Shakspeare and Margery Roberts were married Nov. 25, 1584.

Hamnet⁵ and Judith, son and daughter of WILLIAM SHAKSPERE, were baptized February 2, 1584. [1584-5.]

who was godfather to Shakspeare's son, had two sons, who were baptized by the name of *John*. See note 5.) This was undoubtedly done in the present instance. The former Jone having probably died, (though I can find no entry of her burial in the Register, nor indeed of many of the other children of John Shakspeare) the name of Jone, a very favourite one in those days, was transferred to another new-born child. This latter Jone married Mr. William Hart, a hatter in Stratford, some time, as I conjecture, in the year 1599, when she was thirty years old; for her eldest son William was baptized there, August 28, 1600. There is no entry of her marriage in the Register. MALONE.

⁴ There was also a Mr. *Henry* Shakspeare settled at Hampton-Lucy, as appears from the Register of that parish:

1582—Lettice, daughter of Henry Shakspeare, was baptized.

1585—James, son of Henry Shakspeare, was baptized.

1589—James, son of Henry Shakspeare, was buried.

There was a *Thomas* Shakspeare settled at Warwick; for in the Rolls Chapel I found the enrolment of a deed made in the 44th year of Queen Elizabeth, conveying "to Thomas Shakspeare of Warwick, yeoman, Sachbroke, *alias* Bishop-Sachbroke, in Com. Warw." MALONE.

⁵ Mr. West imagined that our poet's only son was christened by

Margery, wife of John Shakspeare, was buried
Oct. 29, 1587.

Thomas,⁶ son of Richard Queeny, was baptized
Feb. 26, 1588. [1588-9.]

the name of *Samuel*, but he was mistaken. Mr. Hamnet Sadler, who was related, if I mistake not, to the Shakspeare family, appears to have been sponsor for his son; and his wife, Mrs. Judith Sadler, to have been godmother to Judith, the other twin-child. The name *Hamnet* is written very distinctly both in the entry of the baptism and burial of this child. *Hamnet* and *Hamlet* seem to have been considered as the same name, and to have been used indiscriminately both in speaking and writing. Thus, this Mr. Hamnet Sadler, who is a witness to Shakspeare's Will, writes his christian name, *Hamnet*; but the scrivener who drew up the will, writes it *Hamlet*. There is the same variation in the Register of Stratford, where the name is spelt in three or four different ways. Thus, among the baptisms we find, in 1591, "May 26, John, filius *Hamletti* Sadler;" and in 1583, "Sept. 13, Margaret, daughter to *Hamlet* Sadler." But in 1588, Sept. 20, we find "John, son to *Hamnet* Sadler;" in 1596, April 4, we have "Judith, filia *Hamnet* Sadler;" in 1597-8, "Feb. 3. Wilhelmus, filius *Hambnet* Sadler;" and in 1599, "April 23, Francis, filius *Hamnet* Sadler." This Mr. Sadler died in 1624, and the entry of his burial stands thus: "1624, Oct. 26, *Hamlet* Sadler." So also in that of his wife: "1623, March 23, Judith, uxor *Hamlet* Sadler."

The name of Hamlet occurs in several other entries in the Register. Oct. 4, 1576, "*Hamlet*, son to Humphry Holdar," was buried; and Sept. 28, 1564, "Catharina, uxor *Hamoleti* Hassal." Mr. *Hamlet* Smith, formerly of the borough of Stratford, is one of the benefactors annually commemorated there.

Our poet's only son, Hamnet, died in 1596, in the twelfth year of his age. MALONE.

⁶ This gentleman married our poet's youngest daughter. He had three sisters, Elizabeth, Anne, and Mary, and five brothers; Adrian, born in 1586, Richard, born in 1587, William, born in 1593, John in 1597, and George, baptized April 9, 1600. George was curate of the parish of Stratford, and died of a consumption. He was buried there April 11, 1624. In Doctor Hall's pocket-book is the following entry relative to him. "38. Mr. Quiney, tussi gravi cum magna phlegmatis copia, et cibi vomitu, feb. lenta debilitatus," &c. The case concludes thus. "Anno seq. (no year is mentioned in the case, but the preceding case is dated 1624,) in hoc malum incidebat. Multa frustra

Urfula,⁷ daughter of John Shakspeare, was baptized
March 11, 1588. [1588-9.]

Thomas Greene, *alias* Shakspeare,⁸ was buried
March 6, 1589. [1589-90.]

Humphrey, son of John Shakspeare, was baptized
May 24, 1590.

tentata;—placide cum Domino dormit. Fuit boni indolis, et pro
juveni omnifariam doctus.” MALONE.

⁷ This Urfula, and her brothers, Humphrey, and Philip, appear to have been the children of John Shakspeare by Mary, his third wife, though no such marriage is entered in the Register. I have not been able to learn her surname, or in what church she was married. She died in Sept. 1608.

It has been suggested to me that the John Shakspeare here mentioned was an elder brother of our poet, (not his father,) born, like Margaret Shakspeare, before the commencement of the Register: but had this been the case, he probably would have been called John *the younger*, old Mr. Shakspeare being alive in 1589. I am therefore of opinion that our poet's father was meant, and that he was thrice married. MALONE.

⁸ A great many names occur in this Register, with an *alias*, the meaning of which it is not very easy to ascertain. I should have supposed that the persons thus described were illegitimate, and that this Thomas Greene was the son of one of our poet's kinsmen, by a daughter of Thomas Greene, Esq. a gentleman who resided in Stratford; but that in the register we frequently find the word *bastard* expressly added to the names of the children baptized. Perhaps this latter form was only used in the case of servants, labourers, &c. and the illegitimate offspring of the higher orders was more delicately denoted by an *alias*.

The Rev. Mr. Davenport observes to me that there are two families at present in Stratford, (and probably several more,) that are distinguished by an *alias*. “The real name of one of these families is *Roberts*, but they generally go by the name of *Burford*. The ancestor of the family came originally from Burford in Oxfordshire, and was frequently called from this circumstance by the name of Burford. This name has prevailed, and they are always now called by it; but they write their name, Roberts, *alias* Burford, and are so entered in the Register.

“The real name of the other family is Smith, but they are more known by the name of *Buck*. The ancestor of this family, from some circumstance or other, obtained the nickname of Buck, and they now write themselves, Smith, *alias* Buck.”

MALONE.

Philip, son of John Shakspere, was baptized Sept. 21, 1591.

Thomas,⁹ son of Mr. Anthony Nash, was baptized June 20, 1593.

Hamnet, son of WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, was buried Aug. 11, 1596.

William, son of William Hart, was baptized Aug. 28, 1600.

Mr. John Shakspeare was buried Sept. 8, 1601.

Mr. Richard Quiney,² Bailiff of Stratford, was buried May 31, 1602.

Mary, daughter of William Hart, was baptized June 5, 1603.

Thomas, son of William Hart, hatter, was baptized July 24, 1605.

John Hall, gentleman, and Sufanna Shakspere were married June 5, 1607.

Mary, daughter of William Hart, was buried Dec. 17, 1607.

Elizabeth, daughter of John Hall, gentleman, was baptized Feb. 21, 1607. [1607-8.]

Mary Shakspere, widow, was buried Sept. 9, 1608.

Michael, son of William Hart, was baptized Sept. 23, 1608.

Gilbert Shakspeare, adolescens,³ was buried Feb. 3, 1611. [1611-12.]

Richard Shakspere was buried February 4, 1612. [1612-13.]

⁹ This gentleman married our poet's grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall. His father, Mr. Anthony Nash, lived at Welcombe, (where he had an estate,) as appears by the following entry of the baptism of another of his sons: "1598, Oct. 15, John, son to Mr. Anthony Nash, of *Welcombe*." MALONE.

² This was the father of Mr. Thomas Quiney, who married Shakspeare's youngest daughter. MALONE.

³ This was probably a son of Gilbert Shakspeare, our poet's brother. When the elder Gilbert died, the Register does not inform us; but he certainly died before his son. MALONE.

Thomas Queeny and Judith Shakspeare⁴ were married Feb. 10, 1615. (1615-16.)

William Hart, hatter,⁵ was buried April 17, 1616.

WILLIAM SHAKSPERE,⁶ gentleman, was buried April 25,⁷ 1616.

Shakspeare, son of Thomas Quiney, gentleman, was baptized Nov. 23, 1616.

Shakspeare, son of Thomas Quiney, gentleman, was buried May 8, 1617.

Richard, son of Thomas Quiney, was baptized Feb. 9, 1617. [1617-18.]

Thomas, son of Thomas Quiney, was baptized Aug. 29, 1619.

⁴ This lady, who was our poet's youngest daughter, appears to have married without her father's knowledge, for he mentions her in his will as unmarried. Mr. West, as I have already observed, was mistaken in supposing she was married in Feb. 1616, that is, in 1616-17. She was certainly married before her father's death. See a former note in p. 35, in which the entry is given exactly as it stands in the Register.

As Shakspeare the poet married his wife from Shottery, Mr. West conjectured he might have become possessed of a remarkable *house*, and jointly with his wife conveyed it as a part of their daughter Judith's portion to Thomas Queeny. "It is certain," Mr. West adds, "that one Queeny, an elderly gentleman, sold it to ——— Harvey, Esq. of Stockton, near Southam, Warwickshire, father of John Harvey Thursby, Esq. of Abington, near Northampton; and that the aforesaid Harvey sold it again to Samuel Tyler, Esq. whose sisters, as his heirs, now enjoy it."

But how could Shakspeare have conveyed this house, if he ever owned it, to Mr. Queeny, as a marriage portion with his daughter, concerning whom there is the following clause in his will, executed one month before his death: "Provided that if such husband as she *shall* at the end of the said three years be *married* unto," &c.

MALONE.

⁵ This William Hart was our poet's brother-in-law. He died, it appears, a few days before Shakspeare. MALONE.

⁶ He died, as appears from his monument, April 23d. MALONE.

⁷ No one hath protracted the life of *Shakspeare* beyond 1616, except Mr. Hume; who is pleased to add a year to it, contrary to all manner of evidence. FARMER.

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Anthony Nash, Esq.⁸ was buried Nov. 18, 1622.

Mrs. Shakspeare⁹ was buried Aug. 8, 1623.

Mr. Thomas Nash was married to Mrs. Elizabeth Hall, April 22, 1626.

Thomas,² son of Thomas Hart, was baptized April 13, 1634.

Dr. John Hall,³ ["medicus peritissimus,"] was buried Nov. 26, 1635.

⁸ Father of Mr. Thomas Nash, the husband of Elizabeth Hall.

MALONE.

⁹ This lady, who was the poet's widow, and whose maiden name was Anne Hathaway, died, as appears from her tomb-stone (see p. 5, n. 6.) at the age of 67, and consequently was near eight years older than her husband. I have not been able to ascertain when or where they were married, but suspect the ceremony was performed at Hampton-Lucy, or Billesley, in August 1582. The register of the latter parish is lost. MALONE.

² It appears from Lady Barnard's will that this Thomas Hart was alive in 1669. The Register does not ascertain the time of his death, nor that of his father. MALONE.

³ It has been supposed that the family of Miller of Hide-Hall, in the county of Herts, were descended from Dr. Hall's daughter Elizabeth; and to prove this fact, the following pedigree was transmitted some years ago by Mr. Whalley to Mr. Steevens:

John Hall=Sufanna, daughter and co-heiress of
William Shakspeare.

Elizabeth Hall=Thomas Nash, Esq.

A daughter=Sir Reginald Forster, of Warwickshire.

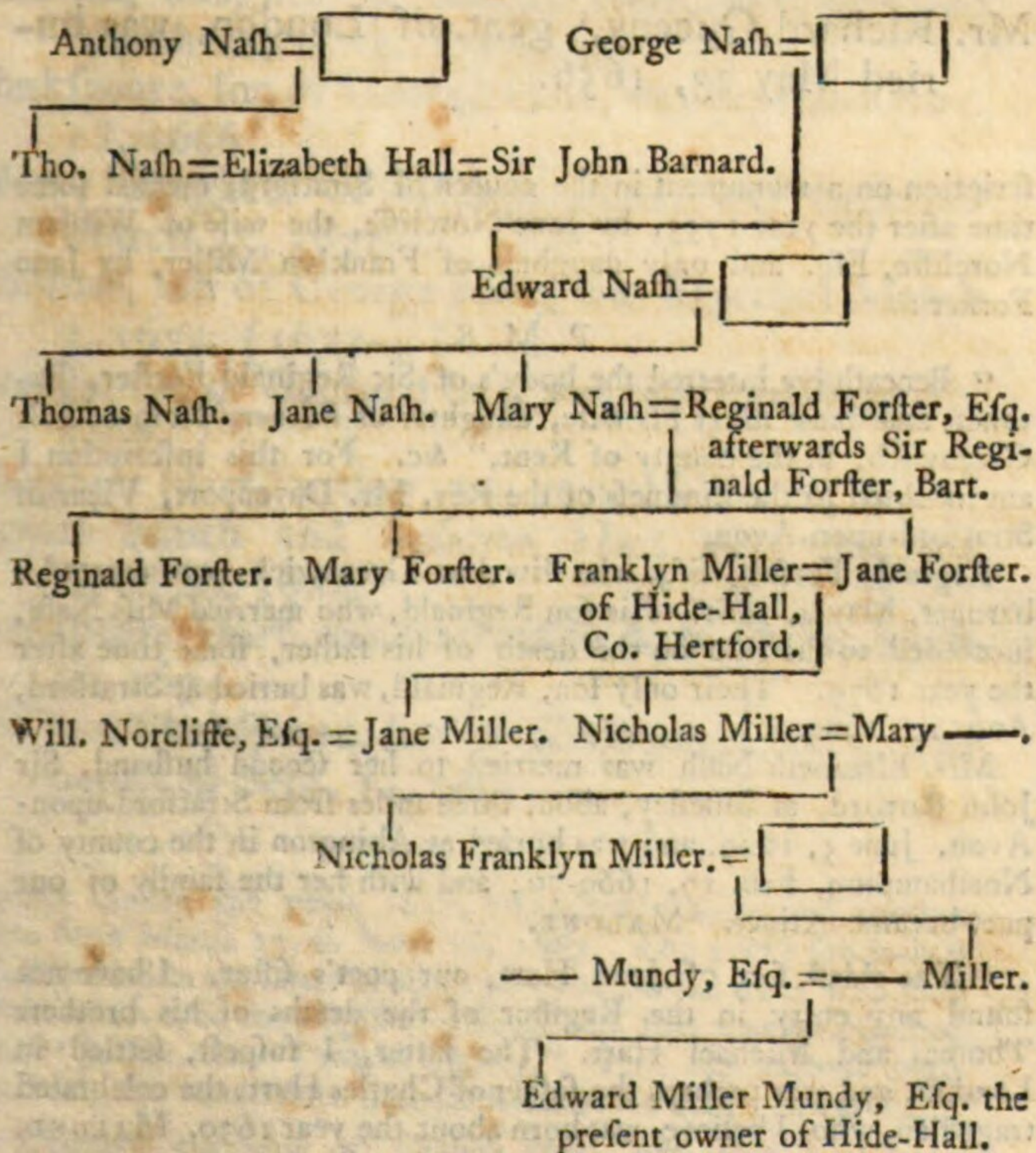
Franklyn Miller=Jane Forster.
Of Hide-Hall,
Co. Hertford.

Nicholas Miller=Mary ———.

Nicholas Franklyn Miller of Hide-Hall, the only surviving branch of the family of Miller.

George, son of Thomas Hart, was baptized Sept.
18, 1636.

But this pedigree is founded on a mistake, and there is undoubtedly no lineal descendant of Shakspeare now living. The mistake was, the supposing that Sir Reginald Forster married a daughter of Mr. Thomas Nash and Elizabeth Hall, who had no issue, either by that gentleman or her second husband, Sir John Barnard. Sir Reginald Forster married the daughter of Edward Nash, Esq. of East Greenwich in the county of Kent, cousin-german to Mr. Thomas Nash; and the pedigree ought to have been formed thus:



That I am right in this statement, appears from the will of Edward Nash, (see p. 38, n. 8.) and from the following in-

Thomas, son of Thomas Quiney, was buried Jan.
28, 1638. [1638-9.]

Richard, son of Thomas Quiney, was buried Feb.
26, 1638. [1638-9.]

William Hart⁴ was buried March 29, 1639.

Mary, daughter of Thomas Hart, was baptized
June 18, 1641.

Joan Hart, widow, was buried Nov. 4, 1646.

Thomas Nash, Esq. was buried April 5, 1647.

Mrs. Sufanna Hall, widow, was buried July 16,
1649.

Mr. Richard Queeny,⁵ gent. of London, was bu-
ried May 23, 1656.

scription on a monument in the church of Stratford, erected some
time after the year 1733, by Jane Norcliffe, the wife of William
Norcliffe, Esq. and only daughter of Franklyn Miller, by Jane
Forster :

P. M. S.

“ Beneath lye interred the body's of Sir Reginald Forster, Ba-
ronet, and dame *Mary* his wife, daughter of *Edward* Nash of East
Greenwich, in the county of Kent,” &c. For this inscription I
am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Mr. Davenport, Vicar of
Stratford-upon-Avon.

Reginald Forster, Esq. who lived at Greenwich, was created a
baronet, May 4, 1661. His son Reginald, who married Miss Nash,
succeeded to the title on the death of his father, some time after
the year 1679. Their only son, Reginald, was buried at Stratford,
Aug. 10, 1685.

Mrs. Elizabeth Nash was married to her second husband, Sir
John Barnard, at Billesley, about three miles from Stratford-upon-
Avon, June 5, 1649, and was buried at Abington in the county of
Northampton, Feb. 17, 1669-70; and with her the family of our
poet became extinct. MALONE.

⁴ The eldest son of Joan Hart, our poet's sister. I have not
found any entry in the Register of the deaths of his brothers
Thomas and Michael Hart. The latter, I suspect, settled in
London, and was perhaps the father of Charles Hart, the celebrated
tragedian, who, I believe, was born about the year 1630. MALONE.

⁵ This gentleman was born in 1587, and was brother to Thomas
Quiney, who married Shakspeare's youngest daughter. It does
not appear when Thomas Quiney died. There is a defect in the

George Hart, son of Thomas Hart, was married by Francis Smyth, Justice of peace, to Hester Ludiate, daughter of Thomas Ludiate, Jan. 9, 1657. [1657-8.]

Elizabeth, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Jan. 9, 1658. [1658-9.]

Jane, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Dec. 21, 1661.

Judith, wife of Thomas Quiney, gent. was buried Feb. 9, 1661. [1661-62.]

Sufanna, daughter of George Hart, was baptized March 18, 1663. [1663-4.]

Shakspeare, son of George Hart, was baptized Nov. 18, 1666.

Mary, daughter of George Hart, was baptized March 31, 1671.

Thomas, son of George Hart, was baptized March 3, 1673. [1673-4.]

George, son of George Hart, was baptized Aug. 20, 1676.

Margaret Hart,⁶ widow, was buried Nov. 28, 1682.

Daniel Smith and Sufanna Hart were married April 16, 1688.

Shakspeare Hart was married to Anne Prew, April 10, 1694.

William Shakspeare, son of Shakspeare Hart, was baptized Sept. 14, 1695.

Register during the years 1642, 1643, and 1644; and another *lacuna* from March 17, to Nov. 18, 1663. Our poet's son-in-law probably died in the latter of those periods; for his wife, who died in Feb. 1661-2, in the Register of Burials for that year is described thus: "Judith, *uxor* Thomas Quiney." Had her husband been then dead, she would have been denominated *vidua*. MALONE.

⁶ Probably the wife of Thomas Hart, who must have been married in or before the year 1633. The marriage ceremony was not performed at Stratford, there being no entry of it in the Register. MALONE.

Hester, wife of George Hart, was buried April 29, 1696.

Anne, daughter of Shakspeare and Anne Hart, was baptized Aug. 9, 1700.

George, son of George and Mary Hart, was baptized Nov. 29, 1700.

George Hart⁷ was buried May 3, 1702.

Hester, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Feb. 10, 1702. [1702-3.]

Catharine, daughter of Shakspeare and Anne Hart, was baptized July 19, 1703.

Mary, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Oct. 7, 1705.

Mary, wife of George Hart, was buried Oct. 7, 1705.

George Hart was married to Sarah Mountford, Feb. 20, 1728. [1728-9.]

Thomas,⁸ son of George Hart, Jun. was baptized May 9, 1729.

Sarah, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Sept. 29, 1733.

Anne, daughter of Shakspeare Hart, was buried March 29, 1738.

Anne, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Sept. 29, 1740.

William Shakspeare, son of William Shakspeare Hart, was baptized Jan. 8, 1743. [1743-4.]

William Shakspeare, son of William Shakspeare Hart, was buried March 8, 1744. [1744-5.]

William, son of George Hart, was buried April 28, 1745.

⁷ He was born in 1636. MALONE.

⁸ This Thomas Hart, who is the fifth in descent from Joan Hart, our poet's sister, is now (1788) living at Stratford, in the house in which Shakspeare was born. MALONE.

George Hart⁹ was buried Aug. 29, 1745.

Thomas, son of William Shakspeare Hart, was buried March 12, 1746. [1746-7.]

Shakspeare Hart³ was buried July 7, 1747.

Catharine, daughter of William Shakspeare Hart, was baptized May 10, 1748.

William Shakspeare Hart³ was buried Feb. 28, 1749. [1749-50.]

The widow Hart⁴ was buried July 10, 1753.

John, son of Thomas Hart, was baptized Aug. 18, 1755.

Anne, daughter of Shakspeare and Anne Hart, was buried Feb. 5, 1760.

Frances, daughter of Thomas Hart, was baptized Aug. 8, 1760.

Thomas, son of Thomas Hart, was baptized Aug. 10, 1764.

Anne, daughter of Thomas Hart, was baptized Jan. 16, 1767.

Sarah, daughter of George Hart, was buried Sept. 10, 1768.

Frances, daughter of Thomas Hart, was buried Oct. 31, 1774.

George Hart⁵ was buried July 8, 1778.

⁹ He was born in 1676, and was great grandson to Joan Hart. MALONE.

² He was born in 1666, and was also great grandson to Joan Hart. MALONE.

³ He was born in 1695. MALONE.

⁴ This absurd mode of entry seems to have been adopted for the purpose of concealment rather than information; for by the omission of the christian name, it is impossible to ascertain from the Register, who was meant. The person here described was, I believe, Anne, the widow of Shakspeare Hart, who died in 1747. MALONE.

⁵ He was born in 1700. MALONE.

SHAKSPEARE'S COAT OF ARMS.

The following instrument⁶ is copied from the original in the College of Heralds: It is marked G. 13. p. 349.

TO all and singuler noble and gentlemen of all estats and degrees, bearing arms, to whom these presents shall come, William Dethick, Garter, Principall King of Arms of England, and William Camden, alias Clarencieulx, King of Arms for the south, east, and west parts of this realme, sendethe greeting. Know ye, that in all nations and kingdoms the record and remembraunce of the valeant facts and vertuous dispositions of worthie men have been made knowne and divulged by certheyne shields of arms and tokens of chevalrie; the grant and testimonie whereof apperteyneth unto us, by vertu of our offices from the Quenes most Exc. Majestie, and her Highenes most noble and victorious progenitors: wherefore being solicted, and by credible report informed, that John Shakspeare, now of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the counte of Warwick, gent, whose parent, great grandfather, and late anteceffor, for his faithfull and approved service to the late most prudent prince, king Henry VII. of famous memorie, was advaunced

⁶ In the Herald's Office are the first draughts of John Shakspeare's grant or confirmation of arms, by William Dethick, Garter, Principal King at Arms, 1596. See Vincent's Prefs, Vol. 157, No. 23, and 24. STEEVENS.

In a Manuscript in the College of Heralds, marked W. 2. p. 276, is the following note: "As for the *speare in bend*, it is a patible difference, and the person to whom it was granted hath borne magistracy, and was justice of peace at Stratford-upon-Avon. He married the daughter and heire of *Arderne*, and was able to maintain that estate." MALONE.

and rewarded with lands and tenements, geven to him in those parts of Warwickshire, where they have continewed by some descents in good reputation and credit; and for that the said John Shakspeare having maryed the daughter and one of the heys of Robert Arden of Wellingcote, in the said countie, and also produced this his auncient cote of arms, heretofore assigned to him whilest he was her Majesties officer and baylese of that towne;⁷ In consideration of the premisses, and for the encouragement of his posteritie, unto whom suche blazon of arms and achievements of inheritance from theyre said mother, by the auncyent custome and lawes of arms, maye lawfully descend; We the said Garter and Clarencieux have assigned, graunted, and by these presents exemplified unto the said John Shakspeare, and to his posteritie, that shield and cote of arms. *viz. In a field of gould upon a bend fables a speare of the first, the poynt upward, bedded argent; and for his crest or cognifance, A falcon with his wyngs displayed, standing on a wrethe of his coullers, supporting a speare armed bedded, or steeled sylver, fyxed uppon a helmet with mantell and tassells, as more playnely maye appeare depected on this margent; and we have likewise uppon on other escutcheon impaled the same with the auncyent arms of the said Arden⁸ of Wellingcote; signifi-*

⁷ — his auncient cote of arms, heretofore assigned to him whilest he was her Majesties officer and baylese of that towne;] This grant of arms was made by — Cook, Clarencieux, in 1569, but is not now extant in the Herald's-Office. MALONE.

⁸ — and we have likewise—impaled the same with the auncyent arms of the said Arden—] It is said by Mr. Jacob, the modern editor of *Arden of Feversham* (first published in 1592 and republished in 1077) that Shakspeare descended by the female line from the gentle-

eng therby, that it maye and shalbe lawfull for the faid John Shakspeare, gent. to beare and use the same shield of arms, single or impaled, as aforsaid, during his naturall lyffe; and that it shalbe lawfull for his children, yssue, and posteritye, (lawfully begottten,) to beare, use, and quarter, and show forth the same, with theyre dewe differences, in all lawfull warlyke facts and civile use or exercises, according to the laws of arms, and custome that to gentlemen belongethe, without let or interruption of any person or persons, for use or bearing the same. In wyttnesse and testemonye whereof we have subscribed our names, and fastened the seals of our offices, geven at the Office of Arms, London, the day of in the xlii yere of the reigne of our most gracious Sovraigne lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God, quene of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. 1599.

man whose unfortunate end is the subject of this tragedy. But the assertion appears to want support, the true name of the person who was murdered at Feversham being *Arderu* and not *Arden*. *Arderu* might be called *Arden* in the play for the sake of better sound, or might be corrupted in the chronicle of Holinshed: yet it is unlikely that the true spelling should be overlooked among the Heralds, whose interest it is to recommend by ostentatious accuracy the trifles in which they deal. STEEVENS.

Arderu was the original name, but in Shakspeare's time it had been softened to *Arden*. See p. 3, n. 2. MALONE.



*Shakspeare's Autograph, if it had been written
on Paper, would have appeared thus.*

W^m Chas^r Sp^r

M O R T G A G E

MADE BY SHAKSPEARE,

A. D. 1612-13.

THE following is a transcript of a deed executed by our author three years before his death. The original deed, which was found in the year 1768, among the title-deeds of the Rev. Mr. Fetherstonhaugh, of Oxted, in the county of Surry, is now in the possession of Mrs. Garrick, by whom it was obligingly transmitted to me through the hands of the Hon. Mr. Horace Walpole. Much has lately been said in various publications relative to the proper mode of spelling Shakspeare's name. It is hoped we shall hear no more idle babble upon this subject. He spelt his name himself as I have just now written it, without the middle *e*. Let this therefore for ever decide the question.

It should be remembered that to all ancient deeds were appended labels of parchment, which were inserted at the bottom of the deed; on the upper part of which labels thus rising above the rest of the parchment, the executing parties wrote their names. Shakspeare, not finding room for the whole of his name on the label, attempted to write the remaining letters at top, but having allowed himself only room enough to write the letter *a*, he gave the matter up. His hand-writing, of which a *fac-simile* is annexed, is much neater than many others, which I have seen, of that age. He neglected, however, to scrape the parchment, in consequence of which the letters appear imperfectly formed.

He purchased the estate here mortgaged, from Henry Walker, for 140l. as appears from the en-

rolment of the deed of bargain and sale now in the Rolls Chapel, dated the preceding day, March 10, 1612-13. The deed here printed shews that he paid down eighty pounds of the purchase-money, and mortgaged the premises for the remainder. This deed and the purchase deed were probably both executed on the same day, (March 10,) like our modern conveyance of Lease and Release. MALONE.

THIS INDENTURE made the eleventh day of March, in the yeares of the reigne of our Sovereigne Lorde James, by the grace of God, king of England, Scotland, Fraunce, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. that is to say, of England, Fraunce and Ireland the tenth, and of Scotland the six-and-fortieth; Between William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the Countie of Warwick, gentleman, William Johnson, Citizen and Vintener of London, John Jackson, and John Hemyng of London, gentlemen, of thone partie, and Henry Walker, Citizen and Minstrell of London, of thother partie; Witnesseeth, that the said William Shakspeare, William Johnson, John Jackson, and John Hemyng, have demised, graunted, and to ferme letten, and by theis presents do demise, graunt, and to ferme lett unto the said Henry Walker, all that dwelling house or tenement, with thappurtenaunts, situate and being within the precinct, circuit and compasse of the late Black ffryers, London, sometymes in the tenure of James Gardyner, Esquire, and since that in the tenure of John Fortescue, gent. and now or late being in the tenure or occupation of one William Ireland, or of his assignee or assignes; abutting upon a streete leading downe to Puddle Wharfe, on the east part, right against the kings Majesties Wardrobe; part of which said tenement is erected over a greate gate

leading to a capitall messuage, which sometye was in the tenure of William Blackwell, Esquire, deceased, and since that in the tenure or occupation of the right honourable Henry now Earle of Northumberlande: And also all that plott of ground on the west side of the same tenement, which was lately inclosed with boords on two sides thereof, by Anne Baton, widow, so farre and in such sorte as the same was inclosed by the said Anne Baton, and not otherwise; and being on the third side inclosed with an old brick wall; which said plott of ground was sometye parcell and taken out of a great voyde peece of ground lately used for a garden; and also the soyle whereupon the said tenement standeth; and also the said brick wall and boords which doe inclose the said plott of ground; with free entrie, acceffe, ingresse, and regresse, in, by, and through, the said great gate and yarde there, unto the usual dore of the said tenement: And also all and singular cellors, follers, romes, lights, easiements, profitts, commodities, and appurtenaunts whatsoever to the said dwelling-house or tenement belonging or in any wise apperteyning: TO HAVE and to HOLDE the said dwelling-house or tenement, cellors, follers, romes, plott of ground, and all and singular other the premisses above by theis presents mentioned to bee demised, and every part and parcell thereof, with thappurtenaunts, unto the said Henry Walker, his executors, administrators, and assignes, from the feast of thannunciacion of the blessed Virgin Marye next coming after the date hereof, unto thende and terme of One hundred yeares from thence next ensuing, and fullie to be compleat and ended, without impeachment of, or for, any manner of waste: YELDING and paying therefore yearlie during the said terme unto the said

William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson, and John Hemyng, their heires and assignes, a pepper corne at the feast of Easter yearly, yf the same be lawfullie demaunded, and noe more. PROVIDED alwayes, that if the said William Shakespeare, his heires, executors, administrators or assignes, or any of them, doe well and trulie paie or cause to be paid to the said Henry Walker, his executors, administrators or assignes, the sum of threescore pounds of lawfull money of England, in and upon the nyne and twentieth day of September next coming after the date hereof, at, or in, the nowe dwelling-house of the said Henry Walker, situate and being in the parish of Saint Martyn neer Ludgate, of London, at one entier payment without delaie; That then and from thenesforth this presente lease, demise and graunt, and all and every matter and thing herein conteyned (other then this provisoe), shall cease, determine, and bee utterlie voyde, frustrate, and of none effect, as though the same had never beene had, ne made; theis presents or any thing therein conteyned to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding. And the said William Shakespeare for himselfe, his heires, executors, and administrators, and for every of them, doth covenant, promisse and graunt to, and with, the said Henry Walker, his executors, administrators and assignes, and everie of them, by theis presentes, that he the said William Shakespeare his heires, executors, administrators or assignes, shall and will cleerlie acquite, exonerate and discharge, or from tyme to tyme, and at all tymes hereafter, well and sufficientlie save and keepe harmless the said Henry Walker, his executors, administrators, and assignes, and every of them, and the said premisses by theis presents demised, and every parcell thereof, with

thappurtenuants, of and from all and al manner of former and other bargaynes, sales, guiftes, graunts, leases, jointures, dowers, intailes, statuts, recognizaunces, judgments, executions; and of, and from, all and every other charge, titles, troubles, and incumbrances whatsoever by the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson, and John Hemyng, or any of them, or by their or any of their meanes, had made, committed or done, before thensealing and delivery of theis presents, or hereafter before the said nyne and twentieth day of September next comming after the date hereof, to bee had, made, committed or done, except the rents and servits to the cheef lord or lords of the fee or fees of the premisses, for, or in respect of, his or their segnorie or seignories onlie, to bee due and done.

IN WITNESSE whereof the said parties to theis indentures interchangeablie have sett their seales. Yeoven the day and years first above written, 1612 [1612-13].

W^m Shakspe.

W^m Johnson.

Jo. Jackson.

*Ensealed and delivered by the
said William Shakespeare,
William Johnson, and John
Jackson,⁹ in the presence of*

Will. Atkinson.

Robert Andrews, Scr.²

Ed. Oudry.

Henry Lawrence, Ser-

vant to the said Scr.

⁹ John Heming did not sign, or seal. MALONE.

² i. e. Scrivener. MALONE.

SHAKSPEARE'S WILL,

From the ORIGINAL

In the Office of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

Vicesimo quinto die Martii,³ Anno Regni Domini nostri Jacobi nunc Regis Angliæ, &c. decimo quarto, et Scotiæ quadragesimo nono. Anno Domini 1616.

IN the name of God, Amen. I William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, gent. in perfect health and memory, (God be praised!) do make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following; that is to say:

First, I commend my soul into the hands of God my creator, hoping, and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting; and my body to the earth whereof it is made.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Judith, one hundred and fifty pounds of lawful English money, to be paid unto her in manner and form following; that is to say, one hundred pounds in discharge of her marriage portion within one year after my decease, with consideration after the rate of two shillings in the pound for so long time as the same shall be unpaid unto her after my decease; and the fifty pounds residue thereof, upon her surrendering of, or giving of such sufficient

³ Our poet's will appears to have been drawn up in February, though not executed till the following month; for *February* was first written, and afterwards struck out, and *March* written over it.

MALONE.

security as the overseers of this my will shall like of, to surrender or grant, all her estate and right that shall descend or come unto her after my decease, or that she now hath, of, in, or to, one copyhold tenement, with the appurtenances, lying and being in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, in the said county of Warwick, being parcel or holden of the manor of Rowington, unto my daughter Susanna Hall, and her heirs for ever.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said daughter Judith one hundred and fifty pounds more, if she, or any issue of her body, be living at the end of three years next ensuing the day of the date of this my will, during which time my executors to pay her consideration from my decease according to the rate aforesaid: and if she die within the said term without issue of her body, then my will is, and I do give and bequeath one hundred pounds thereof to my niece⁴ Elizabeth Hall, and the fifty pounds to be set forth by my executors during the life of my sister Joan Hart, and the use and profit thereof coming, shall be paid to my said sister Joan, and after her decease the said fifty pounds shall remain amongst the children of my said sister, equally to be divided amongst them; but if my said daughter Judith be living at the end of the said three years, or any issue of her body, then my will is, and so I devise and bequeath the said hundred and fifty pounds to be set out by my executors and overseers for the best benefit of her and her issue, and the stock not to be paid unto her so long as she shall be married and covert baron; but my

⁴ ——— to my niece —] Elizabeth Hall was our poet's granddaughter. So, in *Othello*, Act I. sc. i. Iago says to Brabantio, "You'll have your *nephews* neigh to you;" meaning his grandchildren. See the note there. MALONE.

will is, that she shall have the consideration yearly paid unto her during her life, and after her decease the said stock and consideration to be paid to her children, if she have any, and if not, to her executors or assigns, she living the said term after my decease: provided that if such husband as she shall at the end of the said three years be married unto, or at any [time] after, do sufficiently assure unto her, and the issue of her body, lands answerable to the portion by this my will given unto her, and to be adjudged so by my executors and overseers, then my will is, that the said hundred and fifty pounds shall be paid to such husband as shall make such assurance, to his own use.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said sister Joan twenty pounds, and all my wearing apparel, to be paid and delivered within one year after my decease; and I do will and devise unto her the house, with the appurtenances, in Stratford, wherein she dwelleth, for her natural life, under the yearly rent of twelve-pence.

Item, I give and bequeath unto her three sons, William Hart, ——— Hart,⁵ and Michael Hart, five pounds apiece, to be paid within one year after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath unto the said Elizabeth Hall all my plate, (except my broad silver and gilt bowl,⁶) that I now have at the date of this my will.

⁵ ——— *Hart*,] It is singular that neither Shakspeare nor any of his family should have recollected the christian name of his nephew, who was born at Stratford but eleven years before the making of his will. His christian name was *Thomas*; and he was baptized in that town, July 24, 1605. MALONE.

⁶ ——— *except my broad silver and gilt bowl*,] This bowl, as we afterwards find, our poet bequeathed to his daughter Judith. Instead

Item, I give and bequeath unto the poor of Stratford aforefaid ten pounds; to Mr. Thomas Combe⁷ my sword; to Thomas Ruffel, esq. five pounds; and to Francis Collins⁸ of the borough of Warwick, in the county of Warwick, gent. thirteen pounds six shillings and eight-pence, to be paid within one year after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath to Hamlet [*Hamnet*] Sadler⁹ twenty-six shillings eight-pence, to buy

of *bowl*, Mr. Theobald, and all the subsequent editors, have here printed *boxes*. MALONE.

Mr. Malone meant—*boxes*; but he has charged us all with having printed *boxes*, which we most certainly have not printed.

STEEVENS.

⁷ — *Mr. Thomas Combe*,] This gentleman was baptized at Stratford, Feb. 9, 1588-9, so that he was twenty-seven years old at the time of Shakspeare's death. He died at Stratford in July 1657, aged 68; and his elder brother William died at the same place, Jan. 30, 1666-7, aged 80. Mr. Thomas Combe by his will made June 20, 1656, directed his executors to convert all his personal property into money, and to lay it out in the purchase of lands, to be settled on William Combe, the eldest son of John Combe of Allchurch in the county of Worcester, Gent. and his heirs male; remainder to his two brothers successively. Where, therefore our poet's sword has wandered, I have not been able to discover. I have taken the trouble to ascertain the ages of Shakspeare's friends and relations, and the time of their deaths, because we are thus enabled to judge how far the traditions concerning him which were communicated to Mr. Rowe in the beginning of this century, are worthy of credit. MALONE.

⁸ — *to Francis Collins* —] This gentleman, who was the son of Mr. Walter Collins, was baptized at Stratford, Dec. 24, 1582. I know not when he died. MALONE.

⁹ — *to Hamnet Sadler* —] This gentleman was godfather to Shakspeare's only son, who was called after him. Mr. Sadler, I believe, was born about the year 1550, and died at Stratford-upon-Avon, in October 1624. His wife, Judith Sadler, who was godmother to Shakspeare's youngest daughter, was buried there, March 23, 1613-14. Our poet probably was godfather to their son *William*, who was baptized at Stratford, Feb. 5, 1597-8.

MALONE.

him a ring; to William Reynolds, gent. twenty-six shillings eight-pence, to buy him a ring; to my godson William Walker,² twenty shillings in gold; to Anthony Nash,³ gent. twenty-six shillings eight-pence; and to Mr. John Nash,⁴ twenty-six shillings eight-pence; and to my fellows, John Hemyng, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell,⁵ twenty-six shillings eight-pence apiece, to buy them rings.

Item, I give, will, bequeath, and devise, unto my daughter Susanna Hall, for better enabling of her to perform this my will, and towards the performance thereof, all that capital messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, in Stratford aforesaid, called The New Place, wherein I now dwell, and two messuages or tenements, with the appurtenances, situate, lying, and being in Henley-street, within the borough of Stratford aforesaid; and all my barns, stables, orchards, gardens, lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever, situate, lying, and being, or to be had, received, perceived,⁶

² ——— *to my godson, William Walker,*] William, the son of Henry Walker, was baptized at Stratford, Oct. 16, 1608. I mention this circumstance, because it ascertains that our author was at his native town in the autumn of that year. Mr. William Walker was buried at Stratford, March 1, 1679-80. MALONE.

³ ——— *to Anthony Nash,*] He was father of Mr. Thomas Nash, who married our poet's grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall. He lived, I believe, at Welcombe, where his estate lay; and was buried at Stratford, Nov. 18, 1622. MALONE.

⁴ ——— *to Mr. John Nash,*] This gentleman died at Stratford, and was buried there, Nov. 10, 1623. MALONE.

⁵ ——— *to my fellows, John Hemyng, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell,*] These our poet's fellows did not very long survive him. Burbage died in March, 1619; Cundell in December, 1627; and Hemyng in October, 1630. See their wills in the *Account of our old Actors* in Vol. II. MALONE.

⁶ ——— *received, perceived,*] Instead of these words, we have hitherto had in all the printed copies of this will, *reserved, preserved.* MALONE.

or taken, within the towns, hamlets, villages, fields, and grounds of Stratford-upon-Avon, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe,⁷ or in any of them, in the said county of Warwick; and also all that messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, wherein one John Robinson dwelleth, situate, lying, and being, in the Blackfriars in London near the Wardrobe;⁸ and all other my lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever; to have and to hold all and singular the said premises, with their appurtenances, unto the said Sufanna Hall, for and during the term of her natural life; and after her decease to the first son of her body lawfully issuing, and to the heirs males of the body of the said first son lawfully issuing; and

⁷ ——— *old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe,*] The lands of Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe, here devised, were in Shakspeare's time a continuation of one large field, all in the parish of Stratford. Bishopton is two miles from Stratford, and Welcombe one. For *Bishopton*, Mr. Theobald erroneously printed *Busbaxton*, and the error has been continued in all the subsequent editions. The word in Shakspeare's original will is spelt *Busbopton*, the vulgar pronunciation of Bishopton.

I searched the Indexes in the Rolls chapel from the year 1589 to 1616, with the hope of finding an enrolment of the purchase-deed of the estate here devised by our poet, and of ascertaining its extent and value; but it was not enrolled during that period, nor could I find any inquisition taken after his death, by which its value might have been ascertained. I suppose it was conveyed by the former owner to Shakspeare, not by bargain and sale, but by a deed of feoffment, which it was not necessary to enroll.

MALONE.

⁸ ——— *that messuage or tenement—in the Blackfriars in London near the Wardrobe;*] This was the house which was mortgaged to Henry Walker. See p. 89.

By *the Wardrobe* is meant the King's Great Wardrobe, a royal house, near Puddle Wharf, purchased by King Edward the Third from Sir John Beauchamp, who built it. King Richard III. was lodged in this house in the second year of his reign. See Stowe's *Survey*, p. 693, edit. 1618. After the fire of London this office was kept in the Savoy; but it is now abolished. MALONE.

for default of such issue, to the second son of her body lawfully issuing, and to the heirs males of the body of the said second son lawfully issuing; and for default of such heirs, to the third son of the body of the said Susanna lawfully issuing, and to the heirs males of the body of the said third son lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue, the same so to be and remain to the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sons of her body, lawfully issuing one after another, and to the heirs males of the bodies of the said fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sons lawfully issuing, in such manner as it is before limited to be and remain to the first, second, and third sons of her body, and to their heirs males; and for default of such issue, the said premises to be and remain to my said niece Hall, and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue, to my daughter Judith, and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue, to the right heirs of me the said William Shakspeare for ever.

Item, I give unto my wife my second best bed, with the furniture.⁸

⁸ — *my second best bed, with the furniture.*] Thus Shakspeare's original will. Mr. Theobald and the other modern editors have been more bountiful to Mrs. Shakspeare, having printed instead of these words, " — my *brown* best bed, with the furniture."

MALONE.

It appears, in the original will of Shakspeare, (now in the Prerogative-Office Doctors' Commons,) that he had forgot his wife; the legacy to her being expressed by an interlineation, as well as those to Heminge, Burbage, and Condell.

The will is written on three sheets of paper, the two last of which are undoubtedly subscribed with Shakspeare's own hand. The first indeed has his name in the margin, but it differs somewhat in spelling as well as manner, from the two signatures that follow. The reader will find a fac-simile of all the three, as well as those of the witnesses, opposite p. 101. STEEVENS.

William
Shakespeare

William Shakespeare

By Mr William Shakespeare

wished to be publishing
etc. Fra: Collyns
John Shakespeare
John Robinson
Hannet Sadler
Robert Widdroft

Item, I give and bequeath to my said daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bowl. All the rest of my goods, chattels, leases, plate, jewels, and household-stuff whatsoever, after my debts and legacies paid, and my funeral expences discharged, I give, devise, and bequeath to my son-in-law, John Hall, gent. and my daughter Susanna his wife, whom I ordain and make executors of this my last will and testament. And I do entreat and appoint the said Thomas Ruffel, esq. and Francis Collins, gent. to be overseers hereof. And do revoke all former wills, and publish this to be my last will and testament. In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand, the day and year first above-written.

By me⁹ William Shakspeare.

Witness to the publishing hereof,

Fra. Collyns,²
 Julius Shaw,³
 John Robinson,⁴
 Hamnet Sadler,⁵
 Robert Whattcott.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London, coram Magistro William Byrde. Legum Doctore, &c. vicesimo secundo die mensis Junii, Anno Domini 1616; juramento Johannis Hall unius ex. cui, &c. de bene, &c. jurat. reservata potestate, &c. Susannæ Hall, alt. ex. &c. eam cum venerit, &c. petitur. &c.

The name at the top of the margin of the first sheet was probably written by the scrivener who drew the will. This was the constant practice in Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

⁹ By me *William Shakspeare*.] This was the mode of our poet's time. Thus the Register of Stratford is signed at the bottom of

each page, in the year 1616, "*Per me Richard Watts, Minister.*" These concluding words have hitherto been inaccurately exhibited thus: "*— the day and year first above-written by me, William Shakspeare.*" Neither the day, nor year, nor any preceding part of this will, was written by our poet. "*By me,*" &c. only means — *The above is the will of me William Shakspeare.* MALONE.

² — *Fra. Collins.*] See p. 97. MALONE.

³ — *Julius Shæw*—] was born in Sept. 1571. He married Anne Boyes, May 5, 1594; and died at Stratford in June 1629.

MALONE.

⁴ — *John Robinson.*] John, son of Thomas Robinson, was baptized at Stratford, Nov. 30, 1589. I know not when he died.

MALONE.

⁵ — *Hamnet Sadler.*] See p. 97. MALONE.

THE
DEDICATION OF THE PLAYERS.

TO THE
MOST NOBLE AND INCOMPARABLE PAIRE OF
BRETHREN,

W I L L I A M

Earle of PEMBROKE, &c. Lord Chamberlaine to
the Kings most Excellent Majestie;

A N D

P H I L I P

Earle of MONTGOMERY, &c. Gentleman of his
Majesties Bed-chamber.

Both Knights of the Most Noble Order of the
Garter, and our singular good LORDS.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

WHILST we studie to be thankfull in our
particular, for the many favors we have re-
ceived from your L. L. we are false upon the ill
fortune, to mingle two the most diverse things that
can be, feare, and rashnesse; rashnesse in the enter-
prize, and feare of the successe. For, when we
value the places your H. H. sustaine, wee cannot
but know the dignity greater, than to descend to
the reading of these trifles: and, while we name
them trifles, we have deprived ourselves of the
defence of our dedication. But since your L. L.
have been pleased to thinke these trifles something,
heretofore; and have prosequuted both them, and
their authour living, with so much favour; we
hope that (they out-living him, and he not having

the fate, common with some, to be exequutor to his owne writings) you will use the same indulgence toward them, you have done unto their parent. There is a great difference, whether any booke choose his patrones, or find them: this hath done both. For so much were your L. L. likings of the severall parts, when they were acted, as before they were published, the volume asked to be yours. We have but collected them, and done an office to the dead, to procure his orphanes, guardians; without ambition either of selfe-profit, or fame: onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a friend, and fellow alive, as was our SHAKSPEARE, by humble offer of his playes, to your most noble patronage. Wherein, as we have justly observed no man to come neere your L. L. but with a kind of religious addresse, it hath bin the height of our care, who are the presenters, to make the present worthy of your H. H. by the perfection. But, there we must also crave our abilities to be considered, my Lords. We cannot goe beyond our owne powers. Country hands reach forth milke, creame, fruits, or what they have: and many nations (we have heard) that had not gummes and incense, obtained their requests with a leavened cake.⁶ It was no fault to approach their gods by what meanes they could: and the most, though meanest, of things are made more precious, when they are dedicated to temples. In that name therefore, we most humbly consecrate to your H. H. these remaines of your servant SHAKSPEARE; that what delight is in them may be ever your L. L. the reputation his, and the faults ours, if any be committed, by a paire so carefull to shew their gratitude both to the living, and the dead, as is

Your Lordshippes most bounden,

JOHN HEMINGE.

HENRY CONDELL.

THE
P R E F A C E
OF THE
P L A Y E R S.

TO THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS

FROM the most able, to him that can but spell: there you are numbered, we had rather you were weighed. Especially, when the fate of all bookes depends upon your capacities: and not of your heads alone, but of your purses. Well! it is now publique, and you will stand for your priviledges, wee know: to read, and censure. Doe so, but buy it first. That doth best commend a booke, the stationer saies. Then, how odde soever your braines be, or your wisdomes, make your licence the same, and spare not. Judge your fixe-pen'orth, your shillings worth, your five shillings worth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the just rates, and welcome. But, whatever you doe, buy. Censure will not drive a trade, or make the jacke goe. And though you be a magistrate

⁶ *Country hands reach forth milk, &c. and many nations—that had not gummes and incense, obtained their requests with a leavened cake.*] This seems to have been one of the common-places of dedication in Shakspeare's age. We find it in Morley's Dedication of a Book of Songs to Sir Robert Cecil, 1595: "I have presumed" (says he) "to make offer of these simple compositions of mine, imitating (right honourable) in this the customs of the old world, who wanting *incense* to offer up to their gods, made shift insteade thereof to honour them with *milk*." The same thought (if I recollect right) is again employed by the players in their dedication of Fletcher's plays, folio, 1647. MALONE.

HENRY CONDILL

of wit, and sit on the stage at Black-friars, or the Cockpit, to arraigne plays dailie, know, these playes have had their triall already, and stood out all appeales; and do now come forth quitted rather by a decree of court, than any purchased letters of commendation.

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have been wished, that the author himselfe had lived to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; but since it hath been ordained otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you doe not envie his friends the office of their care and paine, to have collected and published them; and so to have published them, as where⁷ (before) you were abused with divers stolne and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that exposed them, even those are now offered to your view cured, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers as he conceived them: who, as he was a happy imitator of nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together; and what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers. But it is not our province, who onely gather his workes, and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we hope, to your divers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and hold you: for his wit can no more lie hid, then it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe: and if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his

⁷ ———as where——] i. e. whereas. MALONE.



R. Clapp Sculp

A POPE ESQ^r

*From an Original Picture by Richardson.
in the Possession of Antony Storer Esq^r*

Pub. Feb. 20. 1793. by B&S Harding Pall Mall.

friends, who, if you need, can be your guides: if you need them not, you can lead yourselves, and others. And such readers we wish him.

JOHN HEMINGE,
HENRY CONDELL.

MR. POPE'S
P R E F A C E.

IT is not my design to enter into a criticism upon this author; though to do it effectually, and not superficially, would be the best occasion that any just writer could take, to form the judgment and taste of our nation. For of all English poets Shakspeare must be confessed to be the fairest and fullest subject for criticism, and to afford the most numerous, as well as most conspicuous instances, both of beauties and faults of all sorts. But this far exceeds the bounds of a preface, the business of which is only to give an account of the fate of his works, and the disadvantages under which they have been transmitted to us. We shall hereby extenuate many faults which are his, and clear him from the imputation of many which are not: a design, which, though it can be no guide to future criticks to do him justice in one way, will at least be sufficient to prevent their doing him an injustice in the other.

I cannot however but mention some of his principal and characteristick excellencies, for which

(notwithstanding his defects) he is justly and universally elevated above all other dramatick writers. Not that this is the proper place of praising him, but because I would not omit any occasion of doing it.

If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakspeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of nature, it proceeded through Ægyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakspeare was inspiration indeed: he is not so much an imitator, as an instrument, of nature; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him.

His *characters* are so much nature herself, that it is a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shews that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image: each picture, like a mock-rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakspeare is as much an individual, as those in life itself; it is as impossible to find any two alike; and such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will, upon comparison, be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character, we must add the wonderful preservation of it; which is such throughout his plays, that had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker.

The *power* over our *passions* was never possessed in a more eminent degree, or displayed in so different instances. Yet all along, there is seen no

labour, no pains to raise them; no preparation to guide our guess to the effect, or be perceived to lead toward it: but the heart swells, and the tears burst out, just at the proper places: we are surprised the moment we weep; and yet upon reflection find the passion so just, that we should be surprised if we had not wept, and wept at that very moment.

How astonishing is it again, that the passions directly opposite to these, laughter and spleen, are no less at his command! that he is not more a master of the *great* than of the *ridiculous* in human nature; of our noblest tenderneſſes, than of our vainest foibles; of our strongest emotions, than of our idlest sensations!

Nor does he only excel in the passions: in the coolness of reflection and reasoning he is full as admirable. His *sentiments* are not only in general the most pertinent and judicious upon every subject; but by a talent very peculiar, something between penetration and felicity, he hits upon that particular point on which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends. This is perfectly amazing, from a man of no education or experience in those great and publick scenes of life which are usually the subject of his thoughts: so that he seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through human nature at one glance, and to be the only author that gives ground for a very new opinion, that the philosopher, and even the man of the world, may be *born*, as well as the poet.

It must be owned, that with all these great excellencies, he has almost as great defects; and that as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse, than any other. But I think I can in some measure account for these defects, from

several causes and accidents; without which it is hard to imagine that so large and so enlightened a mind could ever have been susceptible of them. That all these contingencies should unite to his disadvantage seems to me almost as singularly unlucky, as that so many various (nay contrary) talents should meet in one man, was happy and extraordinary.

It must be allowed that stage-poetry, of all other, is more particularly levelled to please the *populace*, and its success more immediately depending upon the *common suffrage*. One cannot therefore wonder, if Shakspeare, having at his first appearance no other aim in his writings than to procure a subsistence, directed his endeavours solely to hit the taste and humour that then prevailed. The audience was generally composed of the meaner sort of people; and therefore the images of life were to be drawn from those of their own rank: accordingly we find, that not our author's only, but almost all the old comedies have their scene among *tradesmen* and *mechanicks*: and even their historical plays strictly follow the common *old stories* or *vulgar traditions* of that kind of people. In tragedy, nothing was so sure to *surprize* and cause *admiration*, as the most strange, unexpected, and consequently most unnatural, events and incidents; the most exaggerated thoughts; the most verbose and bombast expression; the most pompous rhymes, and thundering versification. In comedy, nothing was so sure to *please*, as mean buffoonery, vile ribaldry, and unmannerly jests of fools and clowns. Yet even in these our author's wit buoys up, and is borne above his subject: his genius in those low parts is like some prince of a romance in the disguise of a shepherd or peasant; a certain greatness and spirit

now and then break out, which manifest his higher extraction and qualities.

It may be added, that not only the common audience had no notion of the rules of writing, but few even of the better sort piqued themselves upon any great degree of knowledge or nicety that way; till Ben Jonson getting possession of the stage, brought critical learning into vogue: and that this was not done without difficulty, may appear from those frequent lessons (and indeed almost declamations) which he was forced to prefix to his first plays, and put into the mouth of his actors, the *grex*, *chorus*, &c. to remove the prejudices, and inform the judgment of his hearers. Till then, our authors had no thoughts of writing on the model of the ancients: their tragedies were only histories in dialogue; and their comedies followed the thread of any novel as they found it, no less implicitly than if it had been true history.

To judge therefore of Shakspeare by Aristotle's rules, is like trying a man by the laws of one country, who acted under those of another. He writ to the *people*; and writ at first without patronage from the better sort, and therefore without aims of pleasing them: without assistance or advice from the learned, as without the advantage of education or acquaintance among them: without that knowledge of the best models, the ancients, to inspire him with an emulation of them; in a word, without any views of reputation, and of what poets are pleased to call immortality: some or all of which have encouraged the vanity, or animated the ambition of other writers.

Yet it must be observed, that when his performances had merited the protection of his prince, and when the encouragement of the court had succeeded to that of the town; the works of his

riper years are manifestly raised above those of his former. The dates of his plays sufficiently evidence that his productions improved, in proportion to the respect he had for his auditors. And I make no doubt this observation would be found true in every instance, were but editions extant from which we might learn the exact time when every piece was composed, and whether writ for the town, or the court.

Another cause (and no less strong than the former) may be deduced from our poet's being a *player*, and forming himself first upon the judgments of that body of men whereof he was a member. They have ever had a standard to themselves, upon other principles than those of Aristotle. As they live by the majority, they know no rule but that of pleasing the present humour, and complying with the wit in fashion; a consideration which brings all their judgment to a short point. Players are just such judges of what is *right*, as tailors are of what is *graceful*. And in this view it will be but fair to allow, that most of our author's faults are less to be ascribed to his wrong judgment as a poet, than to his right judgment as a player.

By these men it would be thought a praise to Shakspeare, that he scarce ever *blotted a line*. This they industriously propagated, as appears from what we are told by Ben Jonson in his *Discoveries*, and from the preface of *Heminge* and *Condell* to the first folio edition. But in reality (however it has prevailed) there never was a more groundless report, or to the contrary of which there are more undeniable evidences. As, the comedy of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which he entirely new writ; *The History of Henry the Sixth*, which was first published under the title of *The Contention of York and Lancaster*; and that of *Henry the Fifth*,

extremely improved; that of *Hamlet* enlarged to almost as much again as at first, and many others. I believe the common opinion of his want of learning proceeded from no better ground. This too might be thought a praise by some, and to this his errors have as injudiciously been ascribed by others. For 'tis certain, were it true, it would concern but a small part of them; the most are such as are not properly defects, but superfoetations: and arise not from want of learning or reading, but from want of thinking or judging: or rather (to be more just to our author) from a compliance to those wants in others. As to a wrong choice of the subject, a wrong conduct of the incidents, false thoughts, forced expressions, &c. if these are not to be ascribed to the forefaid accidental reasons, they must be charged upon the poet himself, and there is no help for it. But I think the two disadvantages which I have mentioned (to be obliged to please the lowest of the people, and to keep the worst of company) if the consideration be extended as far as it reasonably may, will appear sufficient to mislead and depress the greatest genius upon earth. Nay, the more modesty with which such a one is endued, the more he is in danger of submitting and conforming to others, against his own better judgment.

But as to his *want of learning*, it may be necessary to say something more: there is certainly a vast difference between *learning* and *languages*. How far he was ignorant of the latter, I cannot determine; but it is plain he had much reading at least, if they will not call it learning. Nor is it any great matter, if a man has knowledge, whether he has it from one language or from another.

Nothing is more evident than that he had a taste of natural philosophy, mechanicks, ancient and modern history, poetical learning, and mythology: we find him very knowing in the customs, rites, and manners of antiquity. In *Coriolanus* and *Julius Cæsar*, not only the spirit, but manners, of the Romans are exactly drawn; and still a nicer distinction is shewn between the manners of the Romans in the time of the former, and of the latter. His reading in the ancient historians is no less conspicuous, in many references to particular passages: and the speeches copied from Plutarch in *Coriolanus*⁸ may, I think, as well be made an instance of his learning, as those copied from Cicero in *Catiline*, of Ben Jonson's. The manners of other nations in general, the Egyptians, Venetians, French, &c. are drawn with equal propriety. Whatever object of nature, or branch of science, he either speaks of or describes, it is always with competent, if not extensive knowledge: his descriptions are still exact; all his metaphors appropriated, and remarkably drawn from the true nature and inherent qualities of each subject. When he treats of ethick or politick, we may constantly observe a wonderful justness of distinction, as well as extent of comprehension. No one is more a master of the poetical story, or has more frequent allusions to the various parts of it: Mr. Waller (who has been celebrated for this last particular) has not shewn more learning this way than Shakspeare. We have translations from *Ovid* published in his name,⁹ among those poems which pass

⁸ These, as the reader will find in the notes on that play, Shakspeare drew from Sir Thomas North's Translation, 1579.

MALONE.

⁹ They were written by Thomas Heywood. See [Mr. Malone's] Vol. X. p. 321, n. 1. MALONE.

for his, and for some of which we have undoubted authority (being published by himself, and dedicated to his noble patron the earl of Southampton): he appears also to have been conversant in *Plautus*, from whom he has taken the plot of one of his plays: he follows the Greek authors, and particularly Dares Phrygius, in another: (although I will not pretend to say in what language he read them). The modern Italian writers of *novels* he was manifestly acquainted with; and we may conclude him to be no less conversant with the ancients of his own country, from the use he has made of Chaucer in *Troilus and Cressida*, and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, if that play be his, as there goes a tradition it was (and indeed it has little resemblance of Fletcher, and more of our author than some of those which have been received as genuine).

I am inclined to think this opinion proceeded originally from the zeal of the partizans of our author and Ben Jonson; as they endeavoured to exalt the one at the expence of the other. It is ever the nature of parties to be in extremes; and nothing is so probable, as that because Ben Jonson had much the more learning, it was said on the one hand that Shakspeare had none at all; and because Shakspeare had much the most wit and fancy, it was retorted on the other, that Jonson wanted both. Because Shakspeare borrowed nothing, it was said that Ben Jonson borrowed every thing. Because Jonson did not write extempore, he was reproached with being a year about every piece; and because Shakspeare wrote with ease and rapidity, they cried, he never once made a blot. Nay, the spirit of opposition ran so high, that whatever those of the one side objected to the other, was taken at the rebound, and turned into praises; as injudi-

ciously, as their antagonists before had made them objections.

Poets are always afraid of envy; but sure they have as much reason to be afraid of admiration. They are the Scylla and Charybdis of authors; those who escape one, often fall by the other. *Pessimum genus inimicorum laudantes*, says Tacitus; and Virgil desires to wear a charm against those who praise a poet without rule or reason:

“ — si ultra placitum laudârit, baccare frontem
“ Cingite, ne vati noceat — ”

But however this contention might be carried on by the partizans on either side, I cannot help thinking these two great poets were good friends, and lived on amicable terms, and in offices of society with each other. It is an acknowledged fact, that Ben Jonson was introduced upon the stage, and his first works encouraged, by Shakspeare. And after his death, that author writes, *To the memory of his beloved William Shakspeare*, which shews as if the friendship had continued through life. I cannot for my own part find any thing *invidious* or *sparing* in those verses, but wonder Mr. Dryden was of that opinion. He exalts him not only above all his contemporaries, but above Chaucer and Spenser, whom he will not allow to be great enough to be ranked with him; and challenges the names of Sophocles, Euripides, and Æschylus, nay, all Greece and Rome at once, to equal him: and (which is very particular) expressly vindicates him from the imputation of wanting *art*, not enduring that all his excellencies should be attributed to *nature*. It is remarkable too, that the praise he gives him in his *Discoveries* seems to proceed from a *personal kindness*; he tells us, that he loved the man,

as well as honoured his memory ; celebrates the honesty, openness, and frankness of his temper ; and only distinguishes, as he reasonably ought, between the real merit of the author, and the silly and derogatory applauses of the players. Ben Jonson might indeed be sparing in his commendations (though certainly he is not so in this instance) partly from his own nature, and partly from judgment. For men of judgment think they do any man more service in praising him justly, than lavishly. I say, I would fain believe they were friends, though the violence and ill-breeding of their followers and flatterers were enough to give rise to the contrary report. I hope that it may be with *parties*, both in wit and state, as with those monsters described by the poets ; and that their *heads* at least may have something human, though their *bodies* and *tails* are wild beasts and serpents.

As I believe that what I have mentioned gave rise to the opinion of Shakspeare's want of learning ; so what has continued it down to us may have been the many blunders and illiteracies of the first publishers of his works. In these editions their ignorance shines in almost every page ; nothing is more common than *Actus tertia. Exit omnes. Enter three Witches solus.*² Their French is as bad as their Latin, both in construction and spelling : their very Welsh is false. Nothing is more likely than that those palpable blunders of Hector's quoting Aristotle, with others of that gross kind, sprung from the same root : it not being at all credible that these

² *Enter three witches solus.*] This blunder appears to be of Mr. Pope's own invention. It is not to be found in any one of the four folio copies of Macbeth, and there is no quarto edition of it extant, STEEVENS.

could be the errors of any man who had the least tincture of a school, or the least conversation with such as had. Ben Jonson (whom they will not think partial to him) allows him at least to have had *some* Latin; which is utterly inconsistent with mistakes like these. Nay, the constant blunders in proper names of persons and places, are such as must have proceeded from a man, who had not so much as read any history in any language: so could not be Shakspeare's.

I shall now lay before the reader some of those almost innumerable errors, which have risen from one source, the ignorance of the players, both as his actors, and as his editors. When the nature and kinds of these are enumerated and considered, I dare to say that not Shakspeare only, but Aristotle or Cicero, had their works undergone the same fate, might have appeared to want sense as well as learning.

It is not certain that any one of his plays was published by himself. During the time of his employment in the theatre, several of his pieces were printed separately in quarto. What makes me think that most of these were not published by him, is the excessive carelessness of the prefs: every page is so scandalously false spelled, and almost all the learned and unusual words so intolerably mangled, that it is plain there either was no corrector to the prefs at all, or one totally illiterate. If any were supervised by himself, I should fancy *The Two Parts of Henry the Fourth*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, might have been so: because I find no other printed with any exactness; and (contrary to the rest) there is very little variation in all the subsequent editions of them. There are extant two prefaces to the first quarto edition of *Troilus and Cressida* in 1609, and to that of *Othello*; by which

it appears, that the first was published without his knowledge or consent, and even before it was acted, so late as seven or eight years before he died: and that the latter was not printed till after his death. The whole number of genuine plays, which we have been able to find printed in his life-time, amounts but to eleven. And of some of these, we meet with two or more editions by different printers, each of which has whole heaps of trash different from the other: which I should fancy was occasioned by their being taken from different copies belonging to different playhouses.

The folio edition (in which all the plays we now receive as his were first collected) was published by two players, Heminge and Condell, in 1623, seven years after his decease. They declare, that all the other editions were stolen and surreptitious, and affirm theirs to be purged from the errors of the former. This is true as to the literal errors, and no other; for in all respects else it is far worse than the quartos.

First, because the additions of trifling and bombast passages are in this edition far more numerous. For whatever had been added, since those quartos, by the actors, or had stolen from their mouths into the written parts, were from thence conveyed into the printed text, and all stand charged upon the author. He himself complained of this usage in *Hamlet*, where he wishes that *those who play the clowns would speak no more than is set down for them.* (Act III. sc. ii.) But as a proof that he could not escape it, in the old editions of *Romeo and Juliet* there is no hint of a great number of the mean conceits and ribaldries now to be found there. In others, the low scenes of mobs, plebeians, and clowns, are vastly shorter than at present: and I have seen one in particular (which seems to have

belonged to the play-house, by having the parts divided with lines, and the actors names in the margin) where several of those very passages were added in a written hand, which are since to be found in the folio.

In the next place, a number of beautiful passages, which are extant in the first single editions, are omitted in this: as it seems, without any other reason, than their willingness to shorten some scenes: these men (as it was said of Procrustes) either lopping, or stretching an author, to make him just fit for their stage.

This edition is said to be printed from the *original copies*; I believe they meant those which had lain ever since the author's days in the play-house, and had from time to time been cut, or added to, arbitrarily. It appears that this edition, as well as the quartos, was printed (at least partly) from no better copies than the *prompter's book*, or *piece-meal parts* written out for the use of the actors: for in some places their very³ names are through carelessness set down instead of the *Personæ Dramatis*; and in others the notes of direction to the *property-men* for their *moveables*, and to the *players* for their *entries*, are inserted into the text⁴ through the ignorance of the transcribers.

³ *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act II. "Enter Prince Leonato, Claudio, and Jack Wilson," instead of *Balthasar*. And in Act IV. *Cowley* and *Kemp* constantly through a whole scene.

Edit. fol. of 1623, and 1632. POPE.

⁴ Such as,

"My queen is murder'd! Ring the little bell."

"—— His nose grew as sharp as a pen, and a table of green fields;" which last words are not in the quarto. POPE.

There is no such line in any play of Shakspeare, as that quoted above by Mr. Pope. MALONE.

The plays not having been before so much as distinguished by *Acts* and *Scenes*, they are in this edition divided according as they played them; often when there is no pause in the action, or where they thought fit to make a breach in it, for the sake of musick, masques, or monsters.

Sometimes the scenes are transposed and shuffled backward and forward; a thing which could no otherwise happen, but by their being taken from separate and piece-meal written parts.

Many verses are omitted entirely, and others transposed; from whence invincible obscurities have arisen, past the guess of any commentator to clear up, but just where the accidental glimpse of an old edition enlightens us.

Some characters were confounded and mixed, or two put into one, for want of a competent number of actors. Thus in the quarto edition of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V. Shakspeare introduces a kind of master of the revels called *Philostrate*; all whose part is given to another character (that of *Egeus*) in the subsequent editions: so also in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. This too makes it probable that the prompter's books were what they called the original copies.

From liberties of this kind, many speeches also were put into the mouths of wrong persons, where the author now seems chargeable with making them speak out of character: or sometimes perhaps for no better reason, than that a governing player, to have the mouthing of some favourite speech himself, would snatch it from the unworthy lips of an underling.

Prose from verse they did not know, and they accordingly printed one for the other throughout the volume.

Having been forced to say so much of the players, I think I ought in justice to remark, that the judgment, as well as condition of that class of people was then far inferior to what it is in our days. As then the best playhouses were inns and taverns, (the Globe, the Hope, the Red Bull, the Fortune, &c.) so the top of the profession were then mere players, not gentlemen of the stage: they were led into the buttery by the steward:⁵ not placed at the lord's table, or lady's toilette: and consequently were entirely deprived of those advantages they now enjoy in the familiar conversation of our nobility, and an intimacy (not to say dearnefs) with people of the first condition.

From what has been said, there can be no question but had Shakspeare published his works himself (especially in his latter time, and after his retreat from the stage) we should not only be certain which are genuine, but should find in those that are, the errors lessened by some thousands. If I may judge from all the distinguishing marks of his style, and his manner of thinking and writing, I make no doubt to declare that those wretched plays, *Pericles*, *Lochrine*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *Yorkshire Tragedy*, *Lord Cromwell*, *The Puritan*, *London Prodigal*, and a thing called *The Double Falshood*, cannot be admitted as his. And I should conjecture of some of the others, (particularly *Love's Labour's*

⁵ Mr. Pope probably recollected the following lines in *The Taming of the Shrew*, spoken by a Lord, who is giving directions to his servant concerning some players:

“ Go, firrah, take them to the *buttery*,

“ And give them friendly welcome, every one.”

But he seems not to have observed that the players here introduced were *strollers*; and there is no reason to suppose that our author, Heminge, Burbage, Lowin, &c. who were licensed by K. James, were treated in this manner. MALONE.

Lost, The Winter's Tale, Comedy of Errors, and Titus Andronicus,) that only some characters, single scenes, or perhaps a few particular passages, were of his hand. It is very probable what occasioned some plays to be supposed Shakspeare's, was only this; that they were pieces produced by unknown authors, or fitted up for the theatre while it was under his administration; and no owner claiming them, they were adjudged to him, as they give strays to the lord of the manor: a mistake which (one may also observe) it was not for the interest of the house to remove. Yet the players themselves, Heminge and Condell, afterwards did Shakspeare the justice to reject those eight plays in their edition; though they were then printed in his name,⁶ in every body's hands, and acted with some applause (as we learned from what Ben Jonson says of *Pericles* in his ode on the *New Inn*). That *Titus Andronicus* is one of this class I am the rather induced to believe, by finding the same author openly express his contempt of it in the *Induction* to *Bartholomew Fair*, in the year 1614, when Shakspeare was yet living. And there is no better authority for these latter sort, than for the former, which were equally published in his life-time.

If we give into this opinion, how many low and vicious parts and passages might no longer reflect upon this great genius, but appear unworthily charged upon him? And even in those which are really his, how many faults may have been unjustly laid to his account from arbitrary additions, expunctions, transpositions of scenes and lines, confusion of characters and persons, wrong application of speeches, corruptions of innumerable

⁶ His name was affixed only to four of them. MALONE.

passages by the ignorance, and wrong corrections of them again by the impertinence of his first editors? From one or other of these considerations, I am verily persuaded, that the greatest and the grossest part of what are thought his errors would vanish, and leave his character in a light very different from that disadvantageous one, in which it now appears to us.

This is the state in which Shakspeare's writings lie at present; for since the above-mentioned folio edition, all the rest have implicitly followed it, without having recourse to any of the former, or ever making the comparison between them. It is impossible to repair the injuries already done him; too much time has elapsed, and the materials are too few. In what I have done I have rather given a proof of my willingness and desire, than of my ability, to do him justice. I have discharged the dull duty of an editor, to my best judgment, with more labour than I expect thanks, with a religious abhorrence of all innovation, and without any indulgence to my private sense or conjecture. The method taken in this edition will shew itself. The various readings are fairly put in the margin, so that every one may compare them; and those I have preferred into the text are constantly *ex fide codicum*, upon authority. The alterations or additions, which Shakspeare himself made, are taken notice of as they occur. Some suspected passages, which are excessively bad (and which seem interpolations by being so inserted that one can entirely omit them without any chasm, or deficiency in the context) are degraded to the bottom of the page; with an asterisk referring to the places of their insertion. The scenes are marked so distinctly, that every removal of place is specified; which is more necessary in this author than any other, since

he shifts them more frequently; and sometimes, without attending to this particular, the reader would have met with obscurities. The more obsolete or unusual words are explained. Some of the most shining passages are distinguished by commas in the margin; and where the beauty lay not in particulars, but in the whole, a star is prefixed to the scene. This seems to me a shorter and less ostentatious method of performing the better half of criticism (namely, the pointing out an author's excellencies) than to fill a whole paper with citations of fine passages, with *general applauses*, or *empty exclamations* at the tail of them. There is also subjoined a catalogue of those first editions, by which the greater part of the various readings and of the corrected passages are authorized; most of which are such as carry their own evidence along with them. These editions now hold the place of originals, and are the only materials left to repair the deficiencies or restore the corrupted sense of the author: I can only wish that a greater number of them (if a greater were ever published) may yet be found, by a search more successful than mine, for the better accomplishment of this end.

I will conclude by saying of Shakspeare, that with all his faults, and with all the irregularity of his *drama*, one may look upon his works, in comparison of those that are more finished and regular, as upon an ancient majestick piece of *Gothick* architecture, compared with a neat modern building: the latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn. It must be allowed that in one of these there are materials enough to make many of the other. It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments; though we are often conducted to them by

dark, odd, and uncouth passages. Nor does the whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, though many of the parts are childish, ill-placed, and unequal to its grandeur.

MR. THEOBALD'S

P R E F A C E.⁷

THE attempt to write upon SHAKSPEARE is like going into a large, a spacious, and a splendid dome, through the conveyance of a narrow and obscure entry. A glare of light suddenly breaks upon you beyond what the avenue at first promised; and a thousand beauties of genius and character, like so many gaudy apartments pouring at once upon the eye, diffuse and throw themselves out to the mind. The prospect is too wide to come within the compass of a single view: it is a gay confusion of pleasing objects, too various to be enjoyed but in a general admiration; and they must be separated and eyed distinctly, in order to give the proper entertainment.

And as, in great piles of building, some parts are often finished up to hit the taste of the *connoisseur*; others more negligently put together, to strike the fancy of a common and unlearned beholder;

⁷ This is Mr. Theobald's preface to his second edition in 1740, and was much curtailed by himself after it had been prefixed to the impression in 1733. STEEVENS.

some parts are made stupendously magnificent and grand, to surprise with the vast design and execution of the architect; others are contracted, to amuse you with his neatness and elegance in little: so, in Shakspeare, we may find *traits* that will stand the test of the severest judgment; and strokes as carelessly hit off, to the level of the more ordinary capacities; some descriptions raised to that pitch of grandeur, as to astonish you with the compass and elevation of his thought; and others copying nature within so narrow, so confined a circle, as if the author's talent lay only at drawing in miniature.

In how many points of light must we be obliged to gaze at this great poet! In how many branches of excellence to consider and admire him! Whether we view him on the side of art or nature, he ought equally to engage our attention: whether we respect the force and greatness of his genius, the extent of his knowledge and reading, the power and address with which he throws out and applies either nature or learning, there is ample scope both for our wonder and pleasure. If his diction, and the cloathing of his thoughts attract us, how much more must we be charmed with the richness and variety of his images and ideas! If his images and ideas steal into our souls, and strike upon our fancy, how much are they improved in price, when we come to reflect with what propriety and justness they are applied to character! If we look into his characters, and how they are furnished and proportioned to the employment he cuts out for them, how are we taken up with the mastery of his portraits! What draughts of nature! What variety of originals, and how differing each from the other! How are they dressed from the stores of his own luxurious imagination; without being the apes of

mode, or borrowing from any foreign wardrobe! Each of them are the standards of fashion for themselves: like gentlemen that are above the direction of their tailors, and can adorn themselves without the aid of imitation. If other poets draw more than one fool or coxcomb, there is the same resemblance in them, as in that painter's draughts who was happy only at forming a rose; you find them all younger brothers of the same family, and all of them have a pretence to give the same crest: but Shakspeare's clowns and fops come all of a different house; they are no farther allied to one another than as man to man, members of the same species; but as different in features and lineaments of character, as we are from one another in face or complexion. But I am unawares launching into his character as a writer, before I have said what I intended of him as a private member of the republick.

Mr. Rowe has very justly observed, that people are fond of discovering any little personal story of the great men of antiquity; and that the common accidents of their lives naturally become the subject of our critical enquiries: that however trifling such a curiosity at the first view may appear, yet, as for what relates to men of letters, the knowledge of an author may, perhaps, sometimes conduce to the better understanding his works; and, indeed, this author's works, from the bad treatment he has met with from copyists and editors, have so long wanted a comment, that one would zealously embrace every method of information that could contribute to recover them from the injuries with which they have so long lain overwhelmed.

'Tis certain, that if we have first admired the man in his writings, his case is so circumstanced,

that we must naturally admire the writings in the man: that if we go back to take a view of his education, and the employment in life which fortune had cut out for him, we shall retain the stronger ideas of his extensive genius.

His father, we are told, was a considerable dealer in wool; but having no fewer than ten children, of whom our Shakspeare was the eldest, the best education he could afford him was no better than to qualify him for his own business and employment. I cannot affirm with any certainty how long his father lived; but I take him to be the same Mr. John Shakspeare who was living in the year 1599, and who then, in honour of his son, took out an extract of his family arms from the herald's office; by which it appears, that he had been officer and bailiff of Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire; and that he enjoyed some hereditary lands and tenements, the reward of his great grandfather's faithful and approved service to King Henry VII.

Be this as it will, our Shakspeare, it seems, was bred for some time at a free-school; the very free-school, I presume, founded at Stratford: where, we are told, he acquired what Latin he was master of: but that his father being obliged, through narrowness of circumstances, to withdraw him too soon from thence, he was thereby unhappily prevented from making any proficiency in the dead languages; a point that will deserve some little discussion in the sequel of this dissertation.

How long he continued in his father's way of business, either as an assistant to him, or on his own proper account, no notices are left to inform us: nor have I been able to learn precisely at what period of life he quitted his native Stratford, and began his acquaintance with London and the *stage*.

In order to settle in the world after a family-manner, he thought fit, Mr. Rowe acquaints us, to marry while he was yet very young. It is certain he did so: for by the monument in Stratford church, erected to the memory of his daughter Sufanna, the wife of John Hall, gentleman, it appears, that she died on the 2d of July, in the year 1649, aged 66. So that she was born in 1583, when her father could not be full 19 years old; who was himself born in the year 1564. Nor was she his eldest child, for he had another daughter, Judith, who was born before her,⁸ and who was married to one Mr. Thomas Quiney. So that Shakspeare must have entered into wedlock by that time he was turned of seventeen years.

Whether the force of inclination merely, or some concurring circumstances of convenience in the match, prompted him to marry so early, is not easy to be determined at this distance; but, it is probable, a view of interest might partly sway his conduct in this point: for he married the daughter of one Hathaway, a substantial yeoman in his neighbourhood, and she had the start of him in age no less than eight years. She survived him notwithstanding seven seasons, and died that very year the *players* published the first edition of his works in *folio*, anno Dom. 1623, at the age of 67 years, as we likewise learn from her monument in Stratford church.

How long he continued in this kind of settlement, upon his own native spot, is not more easily to be determined. But if the tradition be true, of that extravagance which forced him both to

⁸ See the extracts from the register-book of the parish of Stratford, in a preceding page. STEEVENS.

quit his country and way of living, to wit, his being engaged with a knot of young deer-stealers, to rob the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Cherlecot, near Stratford, the enterprize favours so much of youth and levity, we may reasonably suppose it was before he could write full man. Besides, considering he has left us six-and-thirty plays at least, avowed to be genuine; and considering too that he had retired from the stage, to spend the latter part of his days at his own native Stratford; the interval of time necessarily required for the finishing so many dramatick pieces, obliges us to suppose he threw himself very early upon the play-house. And as he could, probably, contract no acquaintance with the drama, while he was driving on the affair of wool at home; some time must be lost, even after he had commenced player, before he could attain knowledge enough in the science to qualify himself for turning author.

It has been observed by Mr. Rowe, that amongst other extravagancies, which our author has given to his Sir John Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he has made him a deer-stealer; and, that he might at the same time remember his Warwickshire prosecutor, under the name of Justice Shallow, he has given him very near the same coat of arms, which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities* of that county, describes for a family there. There are two coats, I observe, in Dugdale, where three silver fishes are borne in the name of Lucy; and another coat, to the monument of Thomas Lucy, son of Sir William Lucy, in which are quartered, in four several divisions, twelve little fishes, three in each division, probably *Luces*. This very coat, indeed, seems alluded to in Shallow's giving the dozen white *Luces*, and in Slender saying *he may*

quarter. When I consider the exceeding candour and good-nature of our author (which inclined all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit obliged the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him): and that he should throw this humorous piece of satire at his prosecutor, at least twenty years after the provocation given; I am confidently persuaded it must be owing to an unforgiving rancour on the prosecutor's side: and, if this was the case, it were pity but the disgrace of such an inveteracy should remain as a lasting reproach, and Shallow stand as a mark of ridicule to stigmatize his malice.

It is said, our author spent some years before his death in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends, at his native Stratford. I could never pick up any certain intelligence, when he relinquished the stage. I know, it has been mistakenly thought by some, that Spenser's *Thalia*, in his *Tears of his Muses*, where she laments the loss of her Willy in the comick scene, has been applied to our author's quitting the stage. But Spenser himself, it is well known, quitted the stage of life in the year 1598; and, five years after this, we find Shakspeare's name among the actors in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, which first made its appearance in the year 1603. Nor, surely, could he then have any thoughts of retiring, since that very year a licence under the privy-seal was granted by King James I. to him and Fletcher, Burbage, Phillippes, Hemings, Condell, &c. authorizing them to exercise the art of playing comedies, tragedies, &c. as well at their usual house called *The Globe* on the other side of the water, as in any other parts of the kingdom, during his majesty's pleasure (a copy of which licence is preserved in *Rymer's*

Fædera). Again, it is certain, that Shakspeare did not exhibit his *Macbeth* till after the Union was brought about, and till after K. James I. had begun to touch for the *evil*: for it is plain, he has inserted compliments on both those accounts, upon his royal master in that tragedy. Nor, indeed, could the number of the dramattick pieces, he produced, admit of his retiring near so early as that period. So that what Spenser there says, if it relate at all to Shakspeare, must hint at some occasional recess he made for a time upon a disgust taken: or the Willy, there mentioned, must relate to some other favourite poet. I believe, we may safely determine, that he had not quitted in the year 1610. For, in his *Tempest*, our author makes mention of the Bermuda islands, which were unknown to the English, till, in 1609, Sir John Summers made a voyage to North-America, and discovered them, and afterwards invited some of his countrymen to settle a plantation there. That he became the private gentleman at least three years before his decease, is pretty obvious from another circumstance: I mean, from that remarkable and well-known story, which Mr. Rowe has given us of our author's intimacy with Mr. John Combe, an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury; and upon whom Shakspeare made the following facetious epitaph:

“ Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd,
 “ 'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd;
 “ If any man ask, who lies in this tomb,
 “ Oh! oh! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.”

This farcastical piece of wit was, at the gentleman's own request, thrown out extemporally in his company. And this Mr. John Combe I take to be the same, who, by Dugdale in his *Antiquities of*

Warwickshire, is said to have died in the year 1614,⁹ and for whom, at the upper end of the quire of the Guild of the Holy Cross at Stratford, a fair monument is erected, having a statue thereon cut in alabaster, and in a gown, with this epitaph: "Here lieth interred the body of John Combe, esq; who died the 10th of July, 1614, who bequeathed several annual charities to the parish of Stratford, and 100*l.* to be lent to fifteen poor tradesmen from three years to three years, changing the parties every third year, at the rate of fifty shillings *per annum*, the increase to be distributed to the almes-poor there."—The donation has all the air of a rich and sagacious usurer.

Shakspeare himself did not survive Mr. Combe long, for he died in the year 1616, the 53d of his age. He lies buried on the north side of the chancel in the great church at Stratford; where a monument, decent enough for the time, is erected to him, and placed against the wall. He is represented under an arch in a sitting posture, a cushion spread before him, with a pen in his right hand, and his left rested on a scrawl of paper. The Latin distich, which is placed under the cushion, has been given us by Mr. Pope, or his graver, in this manner:

"INGENIO Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,

"Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet."

I confess, I do not conceive the difference betwixt *ingenio* and *genio* in the first verse. They seem to me intirely synonymous terms; nor was the Pylian sage Nestor celebrated for his ingenuity,

⁹ By Mr. Combe's Will, which is now in the Prerogative-office in London, Shakspeare had a legacy of five pounds bequeathed to him. The Will is without any date. REED.

but for an experience and judgment owing to his long age. Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, has copied this distich with a distinction which Mr. Rowe has followed, and which certainly restores us the true meaning of the epitaph:

“JUDICIO Pylium, genio Socratem,” &c.

In 1614, the greater part of the town of Stratford was consumed by fire; but our Shakspeare's house, among some others, escaped the flames. This house was first built by Sir Hugh Clopton, a younger brother of an ancient family in that neighbourhood, who took their name from the manor of Clopton. Sir Hugh was Sheriff of London in the reign of Richard III. and Lord-Mayor in the reign of King Henry VII. To this gentleman the town of Stratford is indebted for the fine stone bridge, consisting of fourteen arches, which, at an extraordinary expence, he built over the Avon, together with a causeway running at the west-end thereof; as also for rebuilding the chapel adjoining to his house, and the cross-aisle in the church there. It is remarkable of him, that, though he lived and died a bachelor, among the other extensive charities which he left both to the city of London and town of Stratford, he bequeathed considerable legacies for the marriage of poor maidens of good name and fame both in London and at Stratford. Notwithstanding which large donations in his life, and bequests at his death, as he had purchased the manor of Clopton, and all the estate of the family; so he left the same again to his elder brother's son with a very great addition: (a proof how well beneficence and œconomy may walk hand in hand in wise families): good part of which estate is yet in the possession of Edward

Clopton, Esq. and Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. lineally descended from the elder brother of the first Sir Hugh, who particularly bequeathed to his nephew, by his will, his house, by the name of his *Great House* in Stratford.

The estate had now been sold out of the Clopton family for above a century, at the time when Shakspeare became the purchaser; who, having repaired and modelled it to his own mind, changed the name to *New-place*, which the mansion-house, since erected upon the same spot, at this day retains. The house and lands, which attended it, continued in Shakspeare's descendants to the time of the *Restoration*; when they were re-purchased by the Clopton family, and the mansion now belongs to Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. To the favour of this worthy gentleman I owe the knowledge of one particular, in honour of our poet's once dwelling-house, of which, I presume, Mr. Rowe never was apprized. When the civil war raged in England, and King Charles the First's queen was driven by the necessity of affairs to make a recess in Warwickshire, she kept her court for three weeks in New-place. We may reasonably suppose it then the best private house in the town; and her majesty preferred it to the college, which was in the possession of the Combe family, who did not so strongly favour the king's party.

How much our author employed himself in poetry, after his retirement from the stage, does not so evidently appear: very few posthumous sketches of his pen have been recovered, to ascertain that point. We have been told, indeed, in print,² but not till very lately, that two large chests

² See an answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakspeare, by a Strolling Player, 8vo. 1729, p. 45. REED.

full of this great man's loose papers and manuscripts, in the hands of an ignorant baker of Warwick, (who married one of the descendants from our Shakspeare,) were carelessly scattered and thrown about as garret lumber and litter, to the particular knowledge of the late Sir William Bishop, till they were all consumed in the general fire and destruction of that town. I cannot help being a little apt to distrust the authority of this tradition, because his wife survived him seven years; and, as his favourite daughter Susanna survived her twenty-six years, it is very improbable they should suffer such a treasure to be removed, and translated into a remoter branch of the family, without a scrutiny first made into the value of it. This, I say, inclines me to distrust the authority of the relation: but notwithstanding such an apparent improbability, if we really lost such a treasure, by whatever fatality or caprice of fortune they came into such ignorant and neglectful hands, I agree with the *relater*, the misfortune is wholly irreparable.

To these particulars, which regard his person and private life, some few more are to be gleaned from Mr. Rowe's *Account of his Life and Writings*: let us now take a short view of him in his publick capacity as a *writer*: and, from thence, the transition will be easy to the *state* in which his *writings* have been handed down to us.

No age, perhaps, can produce an author more various from himself, than Shakspeare has been universally acknowledged to be. The diversity in style, and other parts of composition, so obvious in him, is as variously to be accounted for. His education, we find, was at best but begun: and he started early into a science from the force of genius, unequally assisted by acquired improvements.

His fire, spirit, and exuberance of imagination, gave an impetuosity to his pen: his ideas flowed from him in a stream rapid, but not turbulent; copious, but not ever overbearing its shores. The ease and sweetness of his temper might not a little contribute to his facility in writing; as his employment as a *player*, gave him an advantage and habit of fancying himself the very character he meant to delineate. He used the helps of his function in forming himself to create and express that *sublime*, which other actors can only copy, and throw out, in action and graceful attitude. But, *Nullum sine veniâ placuit ingenium*, says Seneca. The genius, that gives us the greatest pleasure, sometimes stands in need of our indulgence. Whenever this happens with regard to Shakspeare, I would willingly impute it to a vice of *his times*. We see complaisance enough, in our days, paid to a *bad taste*. So that his *clinches*, *false wit*, and descending beneath himself, may have proceeded from a deference paid to the then *reigning barbarism*.

I have not thought it out of my province, whenever occasion offered, to take notice of some of our poet's grand touches of nature, some, that do not appear sufficiently such, but in which he seems the most deeply instructed; and to which, no doubt, he has so much owed that happy preservation of his *characters*, for which he is justly celebrated. Great geniuses, like his, naturally unambitious, are satisfied to conceal their arts in these points. It is the foible of your worse poets to make a parade and ostentation of that little science they have; and to throw it out in the most ambitious colours. And whenever a writer of this class shall attempt to copy these artfull concealments of our author, and shall either think them easy, or practised by a writer for his ease, he will soon be convinced of

his mistake by the difficulty of reaching the imitation of them.

“ Speret idem, fudet multùm, frustrâque laboret,
 “ Ausus idem:—”

Indeed to point out and exclaim upon all the beauties of Shakspeare, as they come singly in review, would be as insipid, as endless; as tedious, as unnecessary: but the explanation of those beauties that are less obvious to common readers, and whose illustration depends on the rules of just criticism, and an exact knowledge of human life, should deservedly have a share in a general critique upon the author. But to pass over at once to another subject:—

It has been allowed on all hands, how far our author was indebted to *nature*; it is not so well agreed, how much he owed to *languages* and acquired *learning*.³ The decisions on this subject were cer-

³ *It has been allowed &c.*] On this subject an eminent writer has given his opinion which should not be suppressed. “ You will ask me, perhaps, now I am on this subject, how it happened that Shakspeare’s language is every where so much his own as to secure his imitations, if they were such, from discovery; when I pronounce with such assurance of those of our other poets. The answer is given for me in the preface to Mr. Theobald’s Shakspeare; though the observation, I think, is too good to come from that critick. It is, that, though his words, agreeably to the state of the English tongue at that time, be generally Latin, his phraseology is perfectly English: an advantage, he owed to his slender acquaintance with the Latin idiom. Whereas the other writers of his age and such others of an older date as were likely to fall into his hands, had not only the most familiar acquaintance with the Latin idiom, but affected on all occasions to make use of it. Hence it comes to pass, that though he might draw sometimes from the Latin (Ben Jonson you know tells us *He had less Greek*) and the learned English writers, he takes nothing but the sentiments; the expression comes of itself and is purely English. *Bishop Hurd’s Letter to Mr. Mason, on the Marks of Imitation*, 8vo, 1758. REED.

tainly set on foot by the hint from Ben Jonson, that he had small Latin, and less Greek: and from this tradition, as it were, Mr. Rowe has thought fit peremptorily to declare, that, "It is without controversy, he had no knowledge of the writings of the ancient poets, for that in his works we find no traces of any thing which looks like an imitation of the ancients. For the delicacy of his taste (continues he) and the natural bent of his own great genius (equal, if not superior, to some of the best of theirs,) would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mixed with, his own writings: and so his not copying, at least, something from them, may be an argument of his never having read them." I shall leave it to the determination of my learned readers, from the numerous passages which I have occasionally quoted in my notes, in which our poet seems closely to have imitated the classics, whether Mr. Rowe's assertion be so absolutely to be depended on. The result of the controversy must certainly, either way, terminate to our author's honour: how happily he could imitate them, if that point be allowed; or how gloriously he could think like them, without owing any thing to imitation.

Though I should be very unwilling to allow Shakspeare so poor a scholar, as many have laboured to represent him, yet I shall be very cautious of declaring too positively on the other side of the question; that is, with regard to my opinion of his knowledge in the dead languages. And therefore the passages, that I occasionally quote from the classics, shall not be urged as proofs that he knowingly imitated those originals; but brought to shew how happily he has expressed himself upon

the same topicks. A very learned critick of our own nation has declared, that a sameness of thought and sameness of expression too, in two writers of a different age, can hardly happen, without a violent suspicion of the latter copying from his predecessor. I shall not therefore run any great risque of a censure, though I should venture to hint, that the resemblances in thought and expression of our author and an ancient (which we should allow to be imitation in the one whose learning was not questioned) may sometimes take its rise from strength of memory, and those impressions which he owed to the school. And if we may allow a possibility of this, considering that, when he quitted the school, he gave into his father's profession and way of living, and had, it is likely, but a slender library of classical learning; and considering what a number of translations, romances, and legends, started about his time, and a little before (most of which, it is very evident, he read); I think it may easily be reconciled why he rather schemed his *plots* and *characters* from these more latter informations, than went back to those fountains, for which he might entertain a sincere veneration, but to which he could not have so ready a recourse.

In touching on another part of his learning, as it related to the knowledge of *history* and *books*, I shall advance something that, at first sight, will very much wear the appearance of a paradox. For I shall find it no hard matter to prove, that, from the grossest blunders in history, we are not to infer his real ignorance of it; nor from a greater use of Latin words, than ever any other English author used, must we infer his intimate acquaintance with that language.

A reader of taste may easily observe, that though Shakspeare, almost in every scene of his historical

plays, commits the grossest offences against chronology, history, and ancient politicks; yet this was not through ignorance, as is generally supposed, but through the too powerful blaze of his imagination, which, when once raised, made all acquired knowledge vanish and disappear before it. But this licence in him, as I have said, must not be imputed to ignorance, since as often we may find him, when occasion serves, reasoning up to the truth of history; and throwing out sentiments as justly adapted to the circumstances of his subject, as to the dignity of his characters, or dictates of nature in general.

Then to come to his knowledge of the Latin tongue, it is certain, there is a surprizing effusion of Latin words made English, far more than in any one English author I have seen; but we must be cautious to imagine, this was of his own doing. For the English tongue, in this age, began extremely to suffer by an inundation of Latin: and this, to be sure, was occasioned by the pedantry of those two monarchs, Elizabeth and James, both great Latinists. For it is not to be wondered at, if both the court and schools, equal flatterers of power, should adapt themselves to the royal taste.

But now I am touching on the question (which has been so frequently agitated, yet so entirely undecided) of his learning and acquaintance with the languages; an additional word or two naturally falls in here upon the genius of our author, as compared with that of Jonson his contemporary. They are confessedly the greatest writers our nation could ever boast of in the *drama*. The first, we say, owed all to his prodigious natural genius; and the other a great deal to his art and learning. This, if attended to, will explain a very remarkable appearance in their writings. Besides those

wonderful master-pieces of art and genius, which each has given us; they are the authors of other works very unworthy of them: but with this difference, that in Jonson's bad pieces we do not discover one single trace of the author of *The Fox* and *Alchemist*; but, in the wild extravagant notes of Shakspeare, you every now and then encounter strains that recognize the divine composer. This difference may be thus accounted for. Jonson, as we said before, owing all his excellence to his art, by which he sometimes strained himself to an uncommon pitch, when at other times he unbent and played with his subject, having nothing then to support him, it is no wonder that he wrote so far beneath himself. But Shakspeare, indebted more largely to nature than the other to acquired talents, in his most negligent hours could never so totally divest himself of his genius, but that it would frequently break out with astonishing force and splendor.

As I have never proposed to dilate farther on the character of my author, than was necessary to explain the nature and use of this edition, I shall proceed to consider him as a genius in possession of an everlasting name. And how great that merit must be, which could gain it against all the disadvantages of the horrid condition in which he has hitherto appeared! Had Homer, or any other admired author, first started into publick so maimed and deformed, we cannot determine whether they had not sunk for ever under the ignominy of such an ill appearance. The mangled condition of Shakspeare has been acknowledged by Mr. Rowe, who published him indeed, but neither corrected his text, nor collated the old copies. This gentleman had abilities, and suf-

ficient knowledge of his author, had but his industry been equal to his talents. The same mangled condition has been acknowledged too by Mr. Pope, who published him likewise, pretended to have collated the old copies, and yet seldom has corrected the text but to its injury. I congratulate with the *manes* of our poet, that this gentleman has been sparing in *indulging his private sense*, as he phrases it; for he, who tampers with an author, whom he does not understand, must do it at the expence of his subject. I have made it evident throughout my remarks, that he has frequently inflicted a wound where he intended a cure. He has acted with regard to our author, as an editor, whom LIPSIUS mentions, did with regard to MARTIAL; *Inventus est nescio quis Popa, qui non vitia ejus, sed ipsum excidit.* He has attacked him like an unhandy *slaughterman*; and not lopped off the *errors*, but the *poet*.

When this is found to be fact, how absurd must appear the praises of such an editor! It seems a moot point, whether Mr. Pope has done most injury to Shakspeare, as his editor and encomiast; or Mr. Rymer done him service, as his rival and censurer. They have both shewn themselves in an equal *impuissance* of suspecting or amending the corrupted passages: and though it be neither prudence to censure or commend what one does not understand; yet if a man must do one when he plays the critick, the latter is the more ridiculous office; and by that Shakspeare suffers most. For the natural veneration which we have for him makes us apt to swallow whatever is given us as *his*, and set off with encomiums; and hence we quit all suspicions of depravity: on the contrary, the censure of so divine an author sets us upon his defence;

and this produces an exact scrutiny and examination, which ends in finding out and discriminating the true from the spurious.

It is not with any secret pleasure that I so frequently animadvert on Mr. Pope as a critick, but there are provocations, which a man can never quite forget. His libels have been thrown out with so much inveteracy, that, not to dispute whether they *should* come from a *christian*, they leave it a question whether they *could* come from a *man*. I should be loth to doubt, as Quintus Serenus did in a like case:

“ Sive homo, seu similis turpissima bestia nobis

“ Vulnera dente dedit. — ”

The indignation, perhaps, for being represented a *blockhead*, may be as strong in us, as it is in the ladies for a reflection on their *beauties*. It is certain, I am indebted to him for some *flagrant civilities*; and I shall willingly devote a part of my life to the honest endeavour of quitting scores: with this exception, however, that I will not return those civilities in his *peculiar* strain, but confine myself, at least, to the limits of *common decency*. I shall ever think it better to want *wit*, than to want *humanity*: and impartial posterity may, perhaps, be of my opinion.

But to return to my subject, which now calls upon me to enquire into those causes, to which the depravations of my author originally may be assigned. We are to consider him as a writer, of whom no authentick manuscript was left extant; as a writer, whose pieces were dispersedly performed on the several *stages* then in being. And it was the custom of those days for the poets to take a price of the *players* for the pieces they from

time to time furnished; and thereupon it was supposed they had no farther right to print them without the consent of the *players*. As it was the interest of the *companies* to keep their plays unpublished, when any one succeeded, there was a contest betwixt the curiosity of the town, who demanded to see it in print, and the policy of the *stagers*, who wished to secrete it within their own walls. Hence many pieces were taken down in short-hand, and imperfectly copied by ear from a *representation*: others were printed from piecemeal parts surreptitiously obtained from the theatres, uncorrect, and without the poet's knowledge. To some of these causes we owe the train of blemishes, that deform those pieces which stole singly into the world in our author's life-time.

There are still other reasons, which may be supposed to have affected the whole set. When the *players* took upon them to publish his works entire, every theatre was ransacked to supply the copy; and *parts* collected, which had gone through as many changes as performers, either from mutilations or additions made to them. Hence we derive many chasms and incoherences in the sense and matter. Scenes were frequently transposed, and shuffled out of their true place, to humour the caprice, or supposed convenience, of some particular actor. Hence much confusion and impropriety has attended and embarrassed the business and fable. To these obvious causes of corruption it must be added, that our author has lain under the disadvantage of having his errors propagated and multiplied by time: because, for near a century, his works were published from the faulty copies, without the assistance of any intelligent editor: which has been the case likewise of many a *classick* writer.

The nature of any distemper once found has generally been the immediate step to a cure. Shakspeare's case has in a great measure resembled that of a corrupt *classick*; and, consequently, the method of cure was likewise to bear a resemblance. By what means, and with what success, this cure has been effected on ancient writers, is too well known, and needs no formal illustration. The reputation, consequent on tasks of that nature, invited me to attempt the method here; with this view, the hopes of restoring to the publick their greatest poet in his original purity, after having so long lain in a condition that was a disgrace to common sense. To this end I have ventured on a labour, that is the first assay of the kind on any modern author whatsoever. For the late edition of Milton, by the learned Dr. Bentley, is, in the main, a performance of another species. It is plain, it was the intention of that great man rather to correct and pare off the excrescencies of the *Paradise Lost*, in the manner that Tucca and Varius were employed to criticise the *Æneis* of Virgil, than to restore corrupted passages. Hence, therefore, may be seen either the iniquity or ignorance of his censurers, who, from some expressions would make us believe the *doctor* every where gives us his corrections as the original text of the author; whereas the chief turn of his criticism is plainly to shew the world, that, if Milton did not write as he would have him, he ought to have wrote so.

I thought proper to premise this observation to the readers, as it will shew that the critick on Shakspeare is of a quite different kind. His genuine text is for the most part religiously adhered to, and the numerous faults and blemishes, purely his own, are left as they were found. Nothing

is altered but what by the clearest reasoning can be proved a corruption of the true text; and the alteration, a real restoration of the genuine reading. Nay, so strictly have I strove to give the true reading, though sometimes not to the advantage of my author, that I have been ridiculously ridiculed for it by those, who either were iniquitously for turning every thing to my disadvantage; or else were totally ignorant of the true duty of an editor.

The science of criticism, as far as it affects an editor, seems to be reduced to these three classes; the emendation of corrupt passages; the explanation of obscure and difficult ones; and an enquiry into the beauties and defects of composition. This work is principally confined to the two former parts: though there are some specimens interspersed of the latter kind, as several of the emendations were best supported, and several of the difficulties best explained, by taking notice of the beauties and defects of the composition peculiar to this immortal poet. But this was but occasional, and for the sake only of perfecting the two other parts, which were the proper objects of the editor's labour. The third lies open for every willing undertaker: and I shall be pleased to see it the employment of a masterly pen.

It must necessarily happen, as I have formerly observed, that where the assistance of manuscripts is wanting to set an author's meaning right, and rescue him from those errors which have been transmitted down through a series of incorrect editions, and a long intervention of time, many passages must be desperate, and past a cure; and their true sense irretrievable either to care or the sagacity of conjecture. But is there any reason

therefore to say, that because all cannot be retrieved, all ought to be left desperate? We should shew very little honesty, or wisdom, to play the tyrants with an author's text; to raze, alter, innovate, and overturn, at all adventures, and to the utter detriment of his sense and meaning: but to be so very reserved and cautious, as to interpose no relief or conjecture, where it manifestly labours and cries out for assistance, seems, on the other hand, an indolent absurdity.

As there are very few pages in Shakspeare, upon which some suspicions of depravity do not reasonably arise; I have thought it my duty in the first place, by a diligent and laborious collation, to take in the assistances of all the older copies.

In his *historical plays*, whenever our English chronicles, and in his tragedies, when Greek or Roman story could give any light, no pains have been omitted to set passages right, by comparing my author with his originals; for, as I have frequently observed, he was a close and accurate copier wherever his *fable* was founded on *history*.

Wherever the author's sense is clear and discoverable, (though, perchance, low and trivial,) I have not by any innovation tampered with his text, out of an ostentation of endeavouring to make him speak better than the old copies have done.

Where, through all the former editions, a passage has laboured under flat nonsense and invincible darkness, if, by the addition or alteration of a letter or two, or a transposition in the pointing, I have restored to him both sense and sentiment; such corrections, I am persuaded, will need no indulgence.

And whenever I have taken a greater latitude and liberty in amending, I have constantly endeavoured to support my corrections and conjectures by parallel passages and authorities from himself, the surest means of expounding any author whatsoever. *Cette voie d'interpreter un auteur par lui-même est plus sûre que tous les commentaires*, says a very learned French critick.

As to my *notes*, (from which the common and learned readers of our author, I hope, will derive some satisfaction,) I have endeavoured to give them a variety in some proportion to their number. Wherever I have ventured at an emendation, a *note* is constantly subjoined to justify and assert the reason of it. Where I only offer a conjecture, and do not disturb the text, I fairly set forth my grounds for such conjecture, and submit it to judgment. Some remarks are spent in explaining passages, where the wit or satire depends on an obscure point of history: others, where allusions are to divinity, philosophy, or other branches of science. Some are added, to shew where there is a suspicion of our author having borrowed from the ancients: others, to shew where he is rallying his contemporaries; or where he himself is rallied by them. And some are necessarily thrown in, to explain an obscure and obsolete *term*, *phrase*, or *idea*. I once intended to have added a complete and copious *glossary*; but as I have been importuned, and am prepared to give a correct edition of our author's *POEMS*, (in which many terms occur that are not to be met with in his *plays*;) I thought a *glossary* to all Shakspeare's works more proper to attend that volume.

In reforming an infinite number of passages in the *pointing*, where the sense was before quite lost, I have frequently subjoined notes to shew the *de-*

proved, and to prove the *reformed*, pointing: a part of labour in this work which I could very willingly have spared myself. May it not be objected, why then have you burdened us with these notes? The answer is obvious, and, if I mistake not, very material. Without such notes, these passages in subsequent editions would be liable, through the ignorance of printers and correctors, to fall into the old confusion: whereas, a note on every one hinders all possible return to depravity: and for ever secures them in a state of purity and integrity not to be lost or forfeited.

Again, as some notes have been necessary to point out the detection of the corrupted text, and establish the restoration of the genuine reading; some others have been as necessary for the explanation of passages obscure and difficult. To understand the necessity and use of this part of my task, some particulars of my author's character are previously to be explained. There are *obscurities* in him, which are common to him with all poets of the same species; there are others, the issue of the times he lived in; and there are others, again, peculiar to himself. The nature of comick poetry being entirely satirical, it busies itself more in exposing what we call caprice and humour, than vices cognizable to the laws. The English, from the happiness of a free constitution, and a turn of mind peculiarly speculative and inquisitive, are observed to produce more *humourists*, and a greater variety of original *characters*, than any other people whatsoever: and these owing their immediate birth to the peculiar genius of each age, an infinite number of things alluded to, glanced at, and exposed, must needs become obscure, as the *characters* themselves are antiquated and disused. An editor there-

fore should be well versed in the history and manners of his author's age, if he aims at doing him a service in this respect.

Besides, *wit* lying mostly in the assemblage of *ideas*, and in putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance, or congruity, to make up pleasant pictures, and agreeable visions in the fancy; the writer, who aims at wit, must of course range far and wide for materials. Now the age in which Shakspeare lived, having, above all others, a wonderful affection to appear learned, they declined vulgar images, such as are immediately fetched from nature, and ranged through the circle of the sciences, to fetch their ideas from thence. But as the resemblances of such ideas to the subject must necessarily lie very much out of the common way, and every piece of wit appear a riddle to the vulgar; this, that should have taught them the forced, quaint, unnatural tract they were in, (and induce them to follow a more natural one,) was the very thing that kept them attached to it. The ostentatious affectation of abstruse learning, peculiar to that time, the love that men naturally have to every thing that looks like mystery, fixed them down to the habit of obscurity. Thus became the poetry of DONNE (though the wittiest man of that age,) nothing but a continued heap of riddles. And our Shakspeare, with all his easy nature about him, for want of the knowledge of the true rules of art, falls frequently into this vicious manner.

The third species of *obscurities* which deform our author, as the effects of his own genius and character, are those that proceed from his peculiar manner of *thinking*, and as peculiar a manner of *cloathing* those *thoughts*. With regard to his *thinking*, it is certain, that he had a general knowledge

of all the sciences: but his acquaintance was rather that of a traveller than a native. Nothing in philosophy was unknown to him; but every thing in it had the grace and force of novelty. And as novelty is one main source of admiration, we are not to wonder that he has perpetual allusions to the most recondite parts of the sciences: and this was done not so much out of affectation, as the effect of admiration begot by novelty. Then, as to his *style and diction*, we may much more justly apply to SHAKSPEARE, what a celebrated writer said of MILTON: *Our language sunk under him, and was unequal to that greatness of soul which furnished him with such glorious conceptions.* He therefore frequently uses old words, to give his diction an air of solemnity; as he coins others, to express the novelty and variety of his ideas.

Upon every distinct species of these *obscurities*, I have thought it my province to employ a note for the service of my author, and the entertainment of my readers. A few transient remarks too I have not scrupled to intermix, upon the poet's *negligences and omissions* in point of art; but I have done it always in such a manner, as will testify my deference and veneration for the immortal author. Some censurers of Shakspeare, and particularly Mr. Rymer, have taught me to distinguish betwixt the *railer and critick*. The outrage of his quotations is so remarkably violent, so pushed beyond all bounds of decency and sober reasoning, that it quite carries over the mark at which it was levelled. Extravagant abuse throws off the edge of the intended disparagement, and turns the madman's weapon into his own bosom. In short, as to Rymer, this is my opinion of him from his *criticisms* on the *tragedies* of the last age. He writes with great vivacity, and appears to have been a scholar:

but as for his knowledge of the art of poetry, I cannot perceive it was any deeper than his acquaintance with Boffu and Dacier, from whom he has transcribed many of his best reflections. The late Mr. Gildon was one attached to Rymer by a similar way of thinking and studies. They were both of that species of criticks who are desirous of displaying their powers rather in finding faults, than in consulting the improvement of the world; the *hypercritical* part of the science of *criticism*.

I had not mentioned the modest liberty I have here and there taken of animadverting on my author, but that I was willing to obviate in time the splenetick exaggerations of my adversaries on this head. From past experiments I have reason to be conscious, in what light this attempt may be placed: and that what I call a *modest liberty* will, by a little of their dexterity, be inverted into downright *impudence*. From a hundred mean and dishonest artifices employed to discredit this edition, and to cry down its editor, I have all the grounds in nature to beware of attacks. But though the malice of wit, joined to the smoothness of versification, may furnish some ridicule; fact, I hope, will be able to stand its ground against banter and gaiety.

It has been my fate, it seems, as I thought it my duty, to discover some *anachronisms* in our author; which might have slept in obscurity but for *this Restorer*, as Mr. Pope is pleased affectionately to style me: as for instance, where Aristotle is mentioned by Hector in *Troilus and Cressida*; and Galen, Cato, and Alexander the Great, in *Coriolanus*. These, in Mr. Pope's opinion, are blunders, which the illiteracy of the first publishers of his works has fathered upon the poet's memory: *it not being at all credible, that these could be the errors of any man who had the least tincture of a school, or the least*

conversation with such as bad. But I have sufficiently proved, in the course of my *notes*, that such *anachronisms* were the effect of poetick licence, rather than of ignorance in our poet. And if I may be permitted to ask a modest question by the way, why may not I restore an *anachronism* really made by our author, as well as Mr. Pope take the privilege to fix others upon him, which he never had it in his head to make; as I may venture to affirm he had not, in the instance of Sir Francis Drake, to which I have spoke in the proper place?

But who shall dare make any words about this freedom of Mr. Pope's towards Shakspeare, if it can be proved, that, in his fits of criticism, he makes no more ceremony with good Homer himself? To try, then, a criticism of his own advancing: in the 8th Book of *The Odyssey*, where Demodocus sings the episode of the loves of Mars and Venus; and that, upon their being taken in the net by Vulcan,

“ ————— The god of arms
“ Must pay the penalty for lawless charms;”

Mr. Pope is so kind gravely to inform us, “ That Homer in this, as in many other places, seems to allude to the laws of Athens, where death was the punishment of adultery.” But how is this significant observation made out? Why, who can possibly object any thing to the contrary?—Does not *Pausanias* relate that *Draco*, the lawgiver to the Athenians, granted impunity to any person that took revenge upon an adulterer? And was it not also the institution of *Solon*, that if any one took an adulterer in the fact, he might use him as he pleased? These things are very true: and to see what a good memory, and sound judgment in conjunction, can

atchieve ! though Homer's date is not determined down to a single year, yet it is pretty generally agreed that he lived above three hundred years before Draco and Solon : and that, it seems, has made him *seem* to allude to the very laws, which these two legislators propounded above three hundred years after. If this inference be not something like an *anachronism* or *prolepsis*, I will look once more into my lexicons for the true meaning of the words. It appears to me, that somebody besides Mars and Venus has been caught in a net by this episode : and I could call in other instances, to confirm what treacherous tackle this net-work is, if not cautiously handled.

How just, notwithstanding, I have been in detecting the *anachronisms* of my author, and in defending him for the use of them, our late editor seems to think, they should rather have slept in obscurity : and the having discovered them is sneered at, as a sort of wrong-headed sagacity.

The numerous corrections which I have made of the poet's text in my SHAKESPEARE *Restored*, and which the publick have been so kind to think well of, are, in the appendix of Mr. Pope's last edition, flightingly called *various readings, guesses, &c.* He confesses to have inserted as many of them as he judged of any the least advantage to the poet ; but says, that the whole amounted to about twenty-five words : and pretends to have annexed a complete list of the rest, which were not worth his embracing. Whoever has read my book will, at one glance, see how in both these points veracity is strained, so an injury might be done. *Malus, etsi obesse non pote, tamen cogitat.*

Another expedient to make my work appear of a trifling nature, has been an attempt to depreciate *literal criticism*. To this end, and to pay a servile

compliment to Mr. Pope, an *anonymous* writer ⁴ has, like a Scotch pedlar in wit, unbraced his pack on the subject. But, that his virulence might not seem to be levelled singly at me, he has done me the honour to join Dr. Bentley in the libel. I was in hopes we should have been both abused with smartness of satire at least, though not with solidity of argument; that it might have been worth some reply in defence of the science attacked. But I may fairly say of this author, as Falstaff does of Poins:—*Hang him, baboon! his wit is as thick as Tewksbury mustard; there is no more conceit in him, than is in a Mallet.* If it be not a prophanation to set the opinion of the divine Longinus against such a scribbler, he tells us expressly, “That to make a judgment upon *words* (and *writings*) is the most consummate fruit of much experience.” ἡ γὰρ τῶν λόγων κρίσις πολλῆς ἔστι πείρας τελευταῖον ἐπιγένημα. Whenever words are depraved, the sense of course must be corrupted; and thence the reader is betrayed into a false meaning.

If the Latin and Greek languages have received the greatest advantages imaginable from the labours of the editors and criticks of the two last ages, by whose aid and assistance the grammarians have been enabled to write infinitely better in that art than even the preceding grammarians, who wrote when those tongues flourished as living languages; I should account it a peculiar happiness, that, by the faint essay I have made in this work, a path might be chalked out for abler hands, by which to derive the same advantages to our own tongue; a tongue, which, though it wants none of the fundamental qualities of an universal language, yet, as a *noble*

⁴ David Mallet. See his poem *Of Verbal Criticism*, Vol. I. of his works, 12mo. 1759. REED.

writer says, lisps and stammers as in its cradle; and has produced little more towards its polishing than complaints of its barbarity.

Having now run through all those points, which I intended should make any part of this dissertation, and having in my *former* edition made publick acknowledgments of the assistances lent me, I shall conclude with a brief account of the methods taken in *this*.

It was thought proper, in order to reduce the bulk and price of the impression, that the notes, wherever they would admit of it, might be abridged: for which reason I have curtailed a great quantity of such, in which explanations were too prolix, or authorities in support of an emendation too numerous: and many I have entirely expunged, which were judged rather verbose and declamatory (and so notes merely of ostentation) than necessary or instructive.

The few literal errors which had escaped notice for want of revivals, in the former edition, are here reformed; and the pointing of innumerable passages is regulated, with all the accuracy I am capable of.

I shall decline making any farther declaration of the pains I have taken upon my author, because it was my duty, as his editor, to publish him with my best care and judgment; and because I am sensible, all such declarations are construed to be laying a sort of debt on the publick. As the former edition has been received with much indulgence, I ought to make my acknowledgments to the town for their favourable opinion of it; and I shall always be proud to think that encouragement the best payment I can hope to receive from my poor studies.



L. Schiavonelli Sculp

S^r THOMAS HANMER.

from the original Picture in the Possession of S^r Cha^s Bunbury.

SIR THOMAS HANMER'S

P R E F A C E.

WHAT the publick is here to expect is a true and correct edition of Shakspeare's works, cleared from the corruptions with which they have hitherto abounded. One of the great admirers of this incomparable author hath made it the amusement of his leifure hours for many years past to look over his writings with a careful eye, to note the obscurities and absurdities introduced into the text, and according to the best of his judgment to restore the genuine sense and purity of it. In this he proposed nothing to himself, but his private satisfaction in making his own copy as perfect as he could: but, as the emendations multiplied upon his hands, other gentlemen, equally fond of the author, desired to see them, and some were so kind as to give their assistance, by communicating their observations and conjectures upon difficult passages which had occurred to them. Thus by degrees the work growing more considerable than was at first expected, they who had the opportunity of looking into it, too partial perhaps in their judgment, thought it worth being made publick; and he, who hath with difficulty yielded to their persuasions, is far from desiring to reflect upon the late editors for the omissions and defects which they left to be supplied by others who should follow them in the same province. On the contrary, he thinks the world much obliged to them for the progress they made in weeding out so great a number of blunders and mistakes as they have

done; and probably he who hath carried on the work might never have thought of such an undertaking, if he had not found a considerable part so done to his hands.

From what causes it proceeded that the works of this author, in the first publication of them, were more injured and abused than perhaps any that ever passed the press, hath been sufficiently explained in the preface to Mr. Pope's edition, which is here subjoined, and there needs no more to be said upon that subject. This only the reader is desired to bear in mind, that as the corruptions are more numerous, and of a grosser kind than can be well conceived but by those who have looked nearly into them; so in the correcting them this rule hath been most strictly observed, not to give a loose to fancy, or indulge a licentious spirit of criticism, as if it were fit for any one to presume to judge what Shakspeare ought to have written, instead of endeavouring to discover truly and retrieve what he did write: and so great caution hath been used in this respect, that no alterations have been made, but what the sense necessarily required, what the measure of the verse often helped to point out, and what the similitude of words in the false reading and in the true, generally speaking, appeared very well to justify.

Most of those passages are here thrown to the bottom of the page, and rejected as spurious, which were stigmatized as such in Mr. Pope's edition; and it were to be wished that more had then undergone the same sentence. The promoter of the present edition hath ventured to discard but few more upon his own judgment, the most considerable of which is that wretched piece of ribaldry in *King Henry the Fifth*, put into the mouths of the French princess and an old gentlewoman, improper

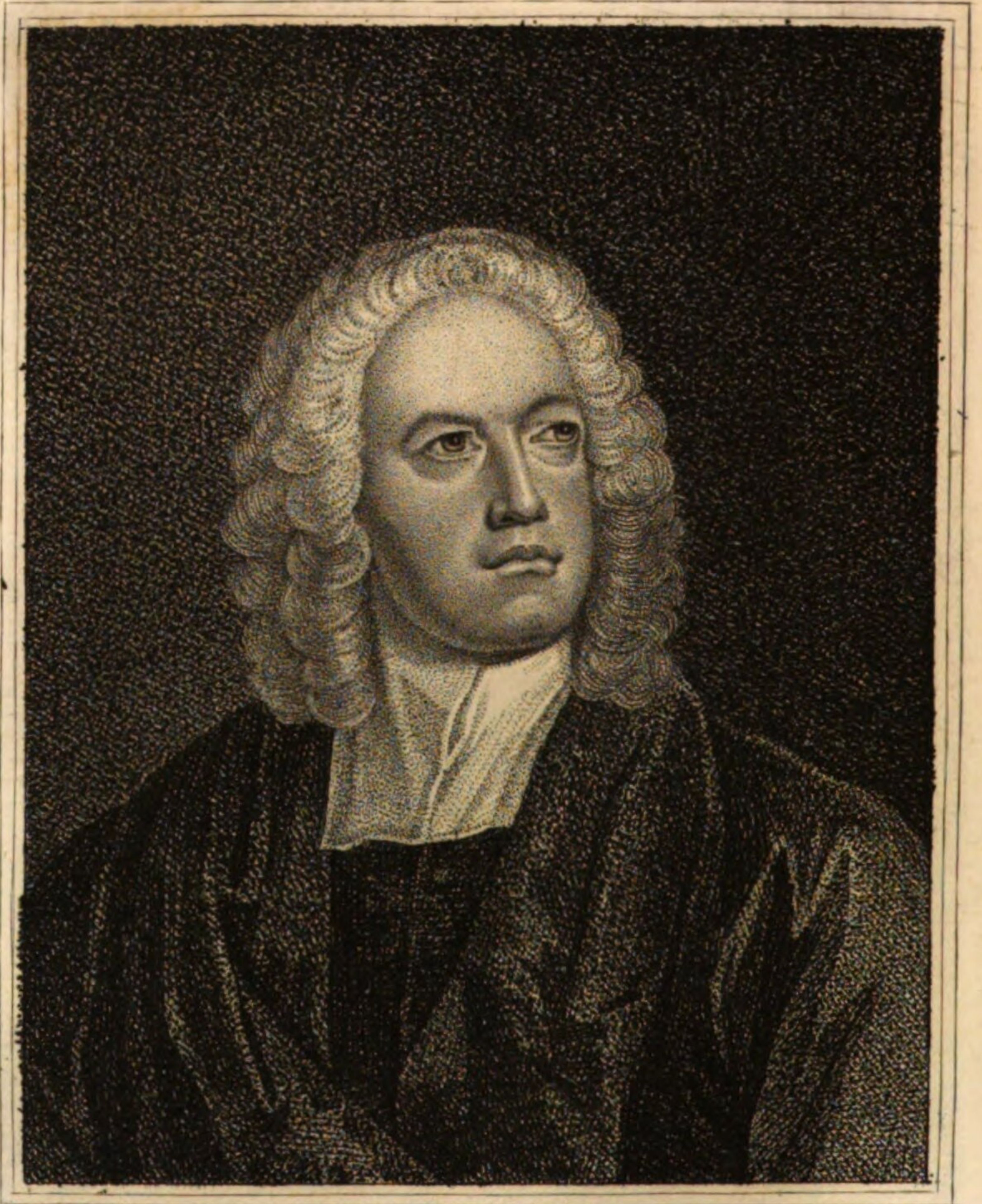
enough as it is all in French, and not intelligible to an English audience, and yet that perhaps is the best thing that can be said of it. There can be no doubt but a great deal more of that low stuff, which disgraces the works of this great author, was foisted in by the players after his death, to please the vulgar audiences by which they subsisted: and though some of the poor witticisms and conceits must be supposed to have fallen from his pen, yet as he hath put them generally into the mouths of low and ignorant people, so it is to be remembered that he wrote for the stage, rude and unpolished as it then was; and the vicious taste of the age must stand condemned for them, since he hath left upon record a signal proof how much he despised them. In his play of *The Merchant of Venice*, a clown is introduced quibbling in a miserable manner; upon which one, who bears the character of a man of sense, makes the following reflection: *How every fool can play upon a word! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none but parrots.* He could hardly have found stronger words to express his indignation at those false pretences to wit then in vogue; and therefore though such trash is frequently interspersed in his writings, it would be unjust to cast it as an imputation upon his taste and judgment and character as a writer.

There being many words in Shakspeare which are grown out of use and obsolete, and many borrowed from other languages which are not enough naturalized or known among us, a glossary is added at the end of the work, for the explanation of all those terms which have hitherto been so many stumbling-blocks to the generality of readers; and where there is any obscurity in the text, not

arising from the words, but from a reference to some antiquated customs now forgotten, or other causes of that kind, a note is put at the bottom of the page, to clear up the difficulty.

With these several helps, if that rich vein of sense which runs through the works of this author can be retrieved in every part, and brought to appear in its true light, and if it may be hoped, without presumption, that this is here effected; they who love and admire him will receive a new pleasure, and all probably will be more ready to join in doing him justice, who does great honour to his country as a rare and perhaps a singular genius; one who hath attained an high degree of perfection in those two great branches of poetry, tragedy and comedy, different as they are in their natures from each other; and who may be said without partiality to have equalled, if not excelled, in both kinds, the best writers of any age or country, who have thought it glory enough to distinguish themselves in either.

Since therefore other nations have taken care to dignify the works of their most celebrated poets with the fairest impressions beautified with the ornaments of sculpture, well may our Shakspeare be thought to deserve no less consideration: and as a fresh acknowledgment hath lately been paid to his merit, and a high regard to his name and memory, by erecting his statue at a publick expence; so it is desired that this new edition of his works, which hath cost some attention and care, may be looked upon as another small monument designed and dedicated to his honour.



S Harding Del,

Pub. Mar: 26. 1793 by E. & S. Harding.

T Nugent Sculp

M^r. WARBURTON.

DR. WARBURTON'S

P R E F A C E.

IT hath been no unusual thing for writers, when dissatisfied with the patronage or judgment of their own times, to appeal to posterity for a fair hearing. Some have even thought fit to apply to it in the first instance; and to decline acquaintance with the publick, till envy and prejudice had quite subsided. But, of all the trusters to futurity, commend me to the author of the following poems, who not only left it to time to do him justice as it would, but to find him out as it could. For, what between too great attention to his profit as a player, and too little to his reputation as a poet, his works, left to the care of door-keepers and prompters, hardly escaped the common fate of those writings, how good soever, which are abandoned to their own fortune, and unprotected by party or cabal. At length, indeed, they struggled into light; but so disguised and travestied, that no classick author, after having run ten secular stages through the blind cloisters of monks and canons, ever came out in half so maimed and mangled a condition. But for a full account of his disorders, I refer the reader to the excellent discourse which follows,^s and turn myself to consider the remedies that have been applied to them.

Shakspeare's works, when they escaped the players, did not fall into much better hands when they came amongst printers and booksellers; who,

^s Mr. Pope's Preface. REED.

to say the truth, had at first but small encouragement for putting him into a better condition. The stubborn nonsense, with which he was incrusted, occasioned his lying long neglected amongst the common lumber of the stage. And when that resistless splendor, which now shoots all around him, had, by degrees, broke through the shell of those impurities, his dazzled admirers became as suddenly insensible to the extraneous scurf that still stuck upon him, as they had been before to the native beauties that lay under it. So that, as then he was thought not to deserve a cure, he was now supposed not to need any.

His growing eminence, however, required that he should be used with ceremony; and he soon had his appointment of an editor in form. But the bookseller, whose dealing was with wits, having learnt of them, I know not what silly maxim, that *none but a poet should presume to meddle with a poet*, engaged the ingenious Mr. Rowe to undertake this employment. A wit indeed he was; but so utterly unacquainted with the whole business of criticism, that he did not even collate or consult the first editions of the work he undertook to publish; but contented himself with giving us a meagre account of the author's life, interlarded with some common-place scraps from his writings. The truth is, Shakspeare's condition was yet but ill understood. The nonsense, now, by consent, received for his own, was held in a kind of reverence for its age and author; and thus it continued till another great *poet* broke the charm, by shewing us, that the higher we went, the less of it was still to be found.

For the proprietors, not discouraged by their first unsuccessful effort, in due time, made a second; and, though they still stuck to their poets,

with infinitely more success in their choice of Mr. Pope, who, by the mere force of an uncommon genius, without any particular study or profession of this art, discharged the great parts of it so well, as to make his edition the best foundation for all further improvements. He separated the genuine from the spurious plays; and, with equal judgment, though not always with the same success, attempted to clear the genuine plays from the interpolated scenes: he then consulted the old editions; and, by a careful collation of them, rectified the faulty, and supplied the imperfect reading, in a great number of places: and lastly, in an admirable preface, hath drawn a general, but very lively sketch of Shakspeare's poetick character; and, in the corrected text, marked out those peculiar strokes of genius which were most proper to support and illustrate that character. Thus far Mr. Pope. And although much more was to be done before Shakspeare could be restored to himself (such as amending the corrupted text where the printed books afford no assistance; explaining his licentious phraseology and obscure allusions; and illustrating the beauties of his poetry); yet, with great modesty and prudence, our illustrious editor left this to the critick by profession.

But nothing will give the common reader a better idea of the value of Mr. Pope's edition, than the two attempts which have been since made by Mr. Theobald and Sir Thomas Hanmer in opposition to it; who, although they concerned themselves only in the *first* of these three parts of criticism, the *restoring the text*, (without any conception of the *second*, or venturing even to touch upon the *third*,) yet succeeded so very ill in it, that they left their

author in ten times a worse condition than they found him. But, as it was my ill fortune to have some accidental connections with these two gentlemen, it will be incumbent on me to be a little more particular concerning them.

The one was recommended to me as a poor man; the other as a poor critick: and to each of them, at different times, I communicated a great number of observations, which they managed, as they saw fit, to the relief of their several distresses. As to Mr. Theobald, who wanted money, I allowed him to print what I gave him for his own advantage; and he allowed himself in the liberty of taking one part for his own, and sequestering another for the benefit, as I supposed, of some future edition. But, as to the Oxford editor, who wanted nothing but what he might very well be without, the reputation of a critick, I could not so easily forgive him for trafficking with my papers without my knowledge; and, when that project failed, for employing a number of my conjectures in his edition against my express desire not to have that honour done unto me.

Mr. Theobald was naturally turned to industry and labour. What he read he could transcribe: but, as what he thought, if ever he did think, he could but ill express, so he read on; and by that means got a character of learning, without risking, to every observer, the imputation of wanting a better talent. By a punctilious collation of the old books, he corrected what was manifestly wrong in the *latter* editions, by what was manifestly right in the *earlier*. And this is his real merit; and the whole of it. For where the phrase was very obsolete or licentious in the *common* books, or only slightly corrupted in the *other*, he wanted sufficient knowledge of the progress and various stages of

the English tongue, as well as acquaintance with the peculiarity of Shakspeare's language, to understand what was right; nor had he either common judgment to see, or critical sagacity to amend, what was manifestly faulty. Hence he generally exerts his conjectural talent in the wrong place: he tampers with what is found in the *common* books; and, in the *old* ones, omits all notice of *variations*, the sense of which he did not understand.

How the Oxford editor came to think himself qualified for this office, from which his whole course of life had been so remote, is still more difficult to conceive. For whatever parts he might have either of genius or erudition, he was absolutely ignorant of the art of criticism, as well as of the poetry of that time, and the language of his author. And so far from a thought of examining the *first* editions, that he even neglected to compare Mr. Pope's, from which he printed his own, with Mr. Theobald's; whereby he lost the advantage of many fine lines, which the other had recovered from the old quartos. Where he trusts to his own sagacity, in what affects the sense, his conjectures are generally absurd and extravagant, and violating every rule of criticism. Though, in this rage of correcting, he was not absolutely destitute of all *art*. For, having a number of my conjectures before him, he took as many of them as he saw fit, to work upon; and by changing them to something, he thought, synonymous or similar, he made them his own; and so became a critick at a cheap expence. But how well he hath succeeded in this, as likewise in his conjectures, which are properly his own, will be seen in the course of my remarks: though, as he hath declined to give the reasons for his interpolations, he hath not afforded

me so fair a hold of him as Mr. Theobald hath done, who was less cautious. But his principal object was to reform his author's numbers; and this, which he hath done, on every occasion, by the insertion or omission of a set of harmless unconcerning expletives, makes up the gross body of his innocent corrections. And so, in spite of that extreme negligence in numbers, which distinguishes the first dramatick writers, he hath tricked up the old bard, from head to foot, in all the finical exactness of a modern measurer of syllables.

For the rest, all the corrections, which these two editors have made on any *reasonable* foundation, are here admitted into the text; and carefully assigned to their respective authors: a piece of justice which the Oxford editor never did; and which the *other* was not always scrupulous in observing towards me. To conclude with them in a word, they separately possessed those two qualities which, more than any other, have contributed to bring the art of criticism into disrepute, *dulness of apprehension*, and *extravagance of conjecture*.

I am now to give some account of the present undertaking. For as to all those things which have been published under the titles of *Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c. on Shakspeare*, (if you except some critical notes on *Macbeth*,⁶ given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as appears, by a man of parts and genius,) the rest are absolutely below a serious notice.

The whole a critick can do for an author, who deserves his service, is to correct the faulty text; to remark the peculiarities of language; to illustrate the obscure allusions; and to explain the

⁶ Published in 1745, by Dr. Johnson. REED.

beauties and defects of sentiment or composition. And surely, if ever author had a claim to this service, it was our Shakspeare; who, widely excelling in the knowledge of human nature, hath given to his infinitely varied pictures of it, such truth of design, such force of drawing, such beauty of colouring, as was hardly ever equalled by any writer, whether his aim was the use, or only the entertainment of mankind. The notes in this edition, therefore, take in the whole compass of criticism.

I. The first sort is employed in restoring the poet's genuine text; but in those places only where it labours with inextricable nonsense. In which, how much soever I may have given scope to critical conjecture, where the old copies failed me, I have indulged nothing to fancy or imagination; but have religiously observed the severe canons of literal criticism, as may be seen from the reasons accompanying every alteration of the common text. Nor would a different conduct have become a critic, whose greatest attention, in this part, was to vindicate the established reading from interpolations occasioned by the fanciful extravagancies of others. I once intended to have given the reader a *body of canons*, for literal criticism, drawn out in form; as well such as concern the art in general, as those that arise from the nature and circumstances of our author's works in particular. And this for two reasons. First, to give the *unlearned reader* a just idea, and consequently a better opinion of the art of criticism, now sunk very low in the popular esteem, by the attempts of some who would needs exercise it without either natural or acquired talents; and by the ill success of others, who seemed to have lost both, when they came to try them upon English authors. Secondly, To

deter the *unlearned writer* from wantonly trifling with an art he is a stranger to, at the expence of his own reputation, and the integrity of the text of established authors. But these uses may be well supplied by what is occasionally said upon the subject, in the course of the following remarks.

II. The second sort of notes consists in an explanation of the author's meaning, when by one or more of these causes it becomes obscure; either from a *licentious use of terms*, or a *hard or ungrammatical construction*; or lastly, from *far-fetched or quaint allusions*.

I. This licentious use of words is almost peculiar to the language of Shakspeare. To common terms he hath affixed meanings of his own, unauthorized by use, and not to be justified by analogy. And this liberty he hath taken with the noblest parts of speech, such as *mixed modes*; which, as they are most susceptible of abuse, so their abuse most hurts the clearness of the discourse. The criticks (to whom Shakspeare's licence was still as much a secret as his meaning which that licence had obscured) fell into two contrary mistakes; but equally injurious to his reputation and his writings. For some of them, observing a darkness that pervaded his whole expression, have censured him for confusion of ideas and inaccuracy of reasoning. *In the neighing of a horse (says Rymer) or in the growling of a mastiff, there is a meaning, there is a lively expression, and, may I say, more humanity than many times in the tragical flights of Shakspeare.* The ignorance of which censure is of a piece with its brutality. The truth is, no one thought clearer, or argued more closely, than this immortal bard. But his superiority of genius less needing the intervention of words in the act of thinking, when he came to draw out his contemplations into dis-

course, he took up (as he was hurried on by the torrent of his matter) with the first words that lay in his way; and if, amongst these, there were two *mixed modes* that had but a principal idea in common, it was enough for him; he regarded them as synonymous, and would use the one for the other without fear or scruple.—Again, there have been others, such as the two last editors, who have fallen into a contrary extreme; and regarded Shakspeare's anomalies (as we may call them) amongst the corruptions of his text; which, therefore, they have cashiered in great numbers, to make room for a jargon of their own. This hath put me to additional trouble; for I had not only their interpolations to throw out again, but the genuine text to replace, and establish in its stead; which, in many cases, could not be done without shewing the peculiar sense of the terms, and explaining the causes which led the poet to so perverse a use of them. I had it once, indeed, in my design, to give a general alphabetick *glossary* of those terms; but as each of them is explained in its proper place, there seemed the less occasion for such an index.

2. The poet's hard and unnatural construction had a different original. This was the effect of mistaken art and design. The publick taste was in its infancy; and delighted (as it always does during that state) in the high and turgid; which leads the writer to disguise a vulgar expression with hard and forced construction, whereby the sentence frequently becomes cloudy and dark. Here his criticks shew their modesty, and leave him to himself. For the arbitrary change of a word doth little towards dispelling an obscurity that ariseth, not from the licentious use of a single term, but from the unnatural arrangement of a whole sentence.

And they risked nothing by their silence. For Shakspeare was too clear in fame to be suspected of a want of meaning; and too high in fashion for any one to own he needed a critick to find it out. Not but, in his best works, we must allow, he is often so natural and flowing, so pure and correct, that he is even a model for style and language.

3. As to his far-fetched and quaint allusions, these are often a cover to common thoughts; just as his hard construction is to common expression. When they are not so, the explanation of them has this further advantage, that, in clearing the obscurity, you frequently discover some latent conceit not unworthy of his genius.

III. The third and last sort of notes is concerned in a critical explanation of the author's beauties and defects; but chiefly of his beauties, whether in style, thought, sentiment, character, or composition. An odd humour of finding fault hath long prevailed amongst the criticks; as if nothing were worth *remarking*, that did not, at the same time, deserve to be reproved. Whereas the public judgment hath less need to be assisted in what it shall reject, than in what it ought to prize; men being generally more ready at spying faults than in discovering beauties. Nor is the value they set upon a work, a certain proof that they understand it. For it is ever seen, that half a dozen voices of credit give the lead: and if the public chance to be in good humour, or the author much in their favour, the people are sure to follow. Hence it is that the true critick hath so frequently attached himself to works of established reputation; not to teach the world to *admire*, which, in those circumstances, to say the truth, they are apt enough to do of themselves; but to teach them how, *with reason to admire*: no easy matter, I will assure you, on the

subject in question: for though it be very true, as Mr. Pope hath observed, that *Shakspeare is the fairest and fullest subject for criticism*, yet it is not such a sort of criticism as may be raised mechanically on the rules which Dacier, Rapin, and Bossu, have collected from antiquity; and of which, such kind of writers as Rymer, Gildon, Dennis, and Oldmixon, have only gathered and chewed the husks: nor on the other hand is it to be formed on the plan of those crude and superficial judgments, on books and things, with which a certain celebrated paper⁷ so much abounds; too good indeed to be named with the writers last mentioned, but being unluckily mistaken for a *model*, because it was an *original*, it hath given rise to a deluge of the worst sort of critical jargon; I mean that which looks most like sense. But the kind of criticism here required, is such as judgeth our author by those only laws and principles on which he wrote, NATURE, and COMMON-SENSE.

Our observations, therefore, being thus extensive, will, I presume, enable the reader to form a right judgment of this favourite poet, without drawing out his character, as was once intended, in a continued discourse.

These, such as they are, were among my younger amusements, when, many years ago, I used to turn over these sort of writers to unbend myself from more serious applications: and what certainly the publick at this time of day had never been troubled with, but for the conduct of the two last editors, and the persuasions of dear Mr. Pope; whose memory and name,

“ ————— semper acerbum,

“ Semper honoratum (sic Di voluistis) habebo.”

⁷ The Spectator. REED.

He was desirous I should give a new edition of this poet, as he thought it might contribute to put a stop to a prevailing folly of altering the text of celebrated authors without talents or judgment. And he was willing that *his* edition should be melted down into *mine*, as it would, he said, afford him (so great is the modesty of an ingenuous temper) a fit opportunity of confessing his mistakes.⁸ In memory of our friendship, I have, therefore, made it our joint edition. His admirable preface is here added; all his notes are given, with his name annexed; the scenes are divided according to his regulation; and the most beautiful passages distinguished, as in his book, with inverted commas. In imitation of him, I have done the same by as many others as I thought most deserving of the reader's attention, and have marked them with *double* commas.

If, from all this, Shakspeare or good letters have received any advantage, and the publick any benefit, or entertainment, the thanks are due to the *proprietors*, who have been at the expence of procuring this edition. And I should be unjust to several deserving men of a reputable and useful profession, if I did not, on this occasion, acknowledge the fair dealing I have always found amongst them; and profess my sense of the unjust prejudice which lies against them; whereby they have been, hitherto, unable to procure that security for their property, which they see the rest of their fellow-citizens enjoy. A prejudice in part arising from the frequent *piracies* (as they are called) committed by members of their own body. But such kind of members no body is without. And it would be hard that this should be turned to the discredit of

⁸ See his Letters to me.

the honest part of the profession, who suffer more from such injuries than any other men. It hath, in part too, arisen from the clamours of profligate scribblers, ever ready, for a piece of money, to prostitute their bad sense for or against any cause profane or sacred; or in any scandal publick or private: these meeting with little encouragement from men of account in the trade (who, even in this enlightened age, are not the very worst judges or rewarders of merit,) apply themselves to people of condition; and support their importunities by false complaints against *booksellers*.

But I should now, perhaps, rather think of my own apology, than busy myself in the defence of others. I shall have some *Tartuffe* ready, on the first appearance of this edition, to call out again, and tell me, that *I suffer myself to be wholly diverted from my purpose by these matters less suitable to my clerical profession*. "Well, but (says a friend) why not take so candid an intimation in good part? Withdraw yourself again, as you are bid, into the clerical pale; examine the records of sacred and profane antiquity; and, on them, erect a work to the confusion of infidelity." Why, I have done all this, and more: and hear now what the same men have said to it. They tell me, *I have wrote to the wrong and injury of religion, and furnished out more handles for unbelievers*. "Oh! now the secret is out; and you may have your pardon, I find, upon easier terms. It is only to write no more." — Good gentlemen! and shall I not oblige them? They would gladly *obstruct* my way to those things which every man, who *endeavours well* in his profession, must needs think he has some claim to, when he sees them given to those who never did *endeavour*; at the same time that they would *deter* me from taking those advantages which letters

enable me to procure for myself. If then I am to write no more (though as much out of my profession as they may please to represent this work, I suspect their modesty would not insist on a scrutiny of our several applications of this profane profit and their purer gains,) if, I say, I am to write no more, let me at least give the publick, who have a better pretence to demand it of me, some reason for my presenting them with these amusements: which, if I am not much mistaken, may be excused by the best and fairest *examples*; and, what is more, may be justified on the surer *reason of things*.

The great Saint CHRYSOSTOM, a name consecrated to immortality by his virtue and eloquence, is known to have been so fond of Aristophanes, as to wake with him at his studies, and to sleep with him under his pillow: and I never heard that this was objected either to his piety or his preaching, not even in those times of pure zeal and primitive religion. Yet, in respect of Shakspeare's great sense, Aristophanes's best wit is but buffoonery; and, in comparison of Aristophanes's freedoms, Shakspeare writes with the purity of a vestal. But they will say, St. Chrysostom contracted a fondness for the comick poet *for the sake of his Greek*. To this, indeed, I have nothing to reply. Far be it from me to insinuate so unscholar-like a thing, as if we had the same use for good English, that a Greek had for his Attick elegance. Critick Kuster, in a taste and language peculiar to grammarians of a certain order, hath decreed, that *the history and chronology of Greek words is the most SOLID entertainment of a man of letters*.

I fly then to a higher example, much nearer home, and still more in point, the famous university of OXFORD. This illustrious body, which

which hath long so justly held, and with such equity dispensed, the chief honours of the learned world, thought good letters so much interested in correct editions of the best English writers, that they, very lately, in their publick capacity, undertook *one* of this very author by subscription. And if the editor hath not discharged his task with suitable abilities for one so much honoured by them, this was not their fault, but his, who thrust himself in- to the employment. After such an example, it would be weakening any defence to seek further for authorities. All that can be now decently urged, is the *reason of the thing*; and this I shall do, more for the sake of that truly venerable body than my own.

Of all the literary exercitations of speculative men, whether designed for the use or entertainment of the world, there are none of so much importance or what are more our immediate concern, than those which let us into the knowledge of our nature. Others may exercise the reason, or amuse the imagination; but these only can improve the heart, and form the human mind to wisdom. Now, in this science, our Shakspeare is confessed to occupy the foremost place; whether we consider the amazing sagacity with which he investigates every hidden spring and wheel of human action; or his happy manner of communicating this knowledge, in the just and living paintings which he has given us of all our passions, appetites, and pursuits. These afford a lesson which can never be too often repeated, or too constantly inculcated; and, to engage the reader's due attention to it, hath been one of the principal objects of this edition.

As this science (whatever profound philosophers may think) is, to the rest, *in things*; so, *in words*, (whatever supercilious pedants may talk) every one's mother tongue is to all other languages. This hath still been the sentiment of nature and true wisdom. Hence, the greatest men of antiquity never thought themselves better employed, than in cultivating their own country idiom. So Lycurgus did honour to Sparta, in giving the first complete edition of Homer; and Cicero to Rome, in correcting the works of Lucretius. Nor do we want examples of the same good sense in modern times, even amidst the cruel inroads that art and fashion have made upon nature and the simplicity of wisdom. Menage, the greatest name in France for all kinds of philologick learning, prided himself in writing critical notes on their best lyric poet Malherbe: and our greater Selden, when he thought it might reflect credit on his country, did not disdain even to comment a very ordinary poet, one Michael Drayton.⁹ But the English tongue, at this juncture, deserves and demands our particular regard. It hath, by means of the many excellent works of different kinds composed in it, engaged the notice, and become the study, of almost every curious and learned foreigner, so as to be

⁹ —our greater Selden, when he thought he might reflect credit on his country, did not disdain to comment a very ordinary poet, one Michael Drayton.] This compliment to himself for condescending to write notes on Shakspeare, Warburton copied from Pope, who sacrificed Drayton to gratify the vanity of this flattering editor. "I have a particular reason (says Pope in a Letter to Warburton) to make you interest yourself in me and my writings. It will cause both them and me to make a better figure to posterity. *A very mediocre poet, one Drayton, is yet taken notice of, because Selden writ a few notes on one of his poems.*" Pope's Works, Vol. IX: p. 350, 8vo. 1751. HOLT WHITE.

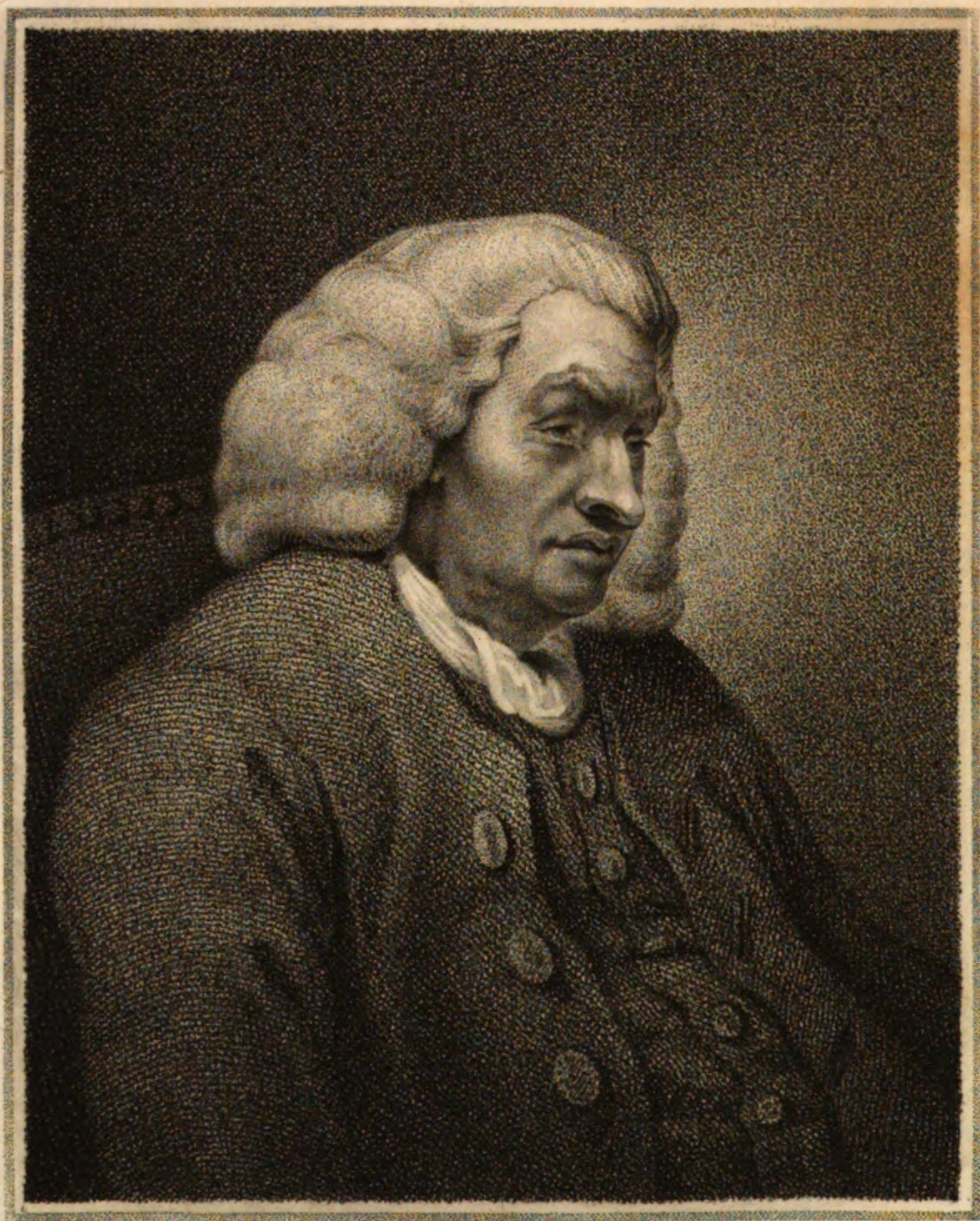
thought even a part of literary accomplishment. This must needs make it deserving of a critical attention: and its being yet destitute of a test or standard to apply to, in cases of doubt or difficulty, shews how much it wants that attention. For we have neither GRAMMAR nor DICTIONARY, neither chart nor compass, to guide us through this wide sea of words. And indeed how should we? since both are to be composed and finished on the authority of our best established writers. But their authority can be of little use, till the text hath been correctly settled, and the phraseology critically examined. As, then, by these aids, a *Grammar* and *Dictionary*, planned upon the best rules of logick and philosophy (and none but such will deserve the name,) are to be procured; the forwarding of this will be a general concern: for, as Quintilian observes, “*Verborum proprietas ac differentia omnibus, qui sermonem curæ habent, debet esse communis.*” By this way, the Italians have brought their tongue to a degree of purity and stability, which no living language ever attained unto before. It is with pleasure I observe, that these things now begin to be understood among ourselves; and that I can acquaint the publick, we may soon expect very elegant editions of Fletcher and Milton’s *Paradise Lost* from gentlemen of distinguished abilities and learning. But this interval of good sense, as it may be short, is indeed but new. For I remember to have heard of a very learned man, who, not long since, formed a design, of giving a more correct edition of Spenser; and, without doubt, would have performed it well; but he was dissuaded from his purpose by his friends, as beneath the dignity of a professor of the occult sciences. Yet these very friends, I suppose, would have thought it added lustre to his high

station, to have new-furbished out some dull northern chronicle, or dark Sibylline ænigma. But let it not be thought that what is here said insinuates any thing to the discredit of Greek and Latin criticism. If the follies of particular men were sufficient to bring any branch of learning into disrepute, I do not know any that would stand in a worse situation than that for which I now apologize. For I hardly think there ever appeared, in any *learned* language, so execrable a heap of nonsense, under the name of commentaries, as hath been lately given us on a certain satirick poet, of the last age, by his editor and coadjutor.²

I am sensible how unjustly the very best *classical* criticks have been treated. It is said, that our great philosopher³ spoke with much contempt of the two finest scholars of this age, Dr. Bentley and Bishop Hare, for squabbling, as he expressed it, about an old play-book; meaning, I suppose, Terence's comedies. But this story is unworthy of him; though well enough suiting the fanatic turn of the wild writer that relates it; such censures are amongst the follies of men immoderately given over to one science, and ignorantly undervaluing all the rest. Those learned criticks might, and perhaps did, laugh in their turn (though still, sure, with the same indecency and indiscretion) at that incomparable man, for wearing out a long life in poring through a telescope. Indeed, the weaknesses of such are to be mentioned with reverence. But who can bear, without indignation, the fashionable cant of every trifling writer, whose insipidity

² This alludes to Dr. Grey's edition of *Hudibras* published in 1744. REED.

³ Sir Isaac Newton. See Whiston's *Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Clarke*, 1748, 8vo. p. 113. REED.



T. Trotter Sculp.

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

From an Original Drawing by T. Trotter, in the Possession of the Rev. D. Farmer.

Pub April 27, 1792. by K. Harding Fleet Street.

passes, with himself, for politeness, for pretending to be shocked, forsooth, with the rude and savage air of *vulgar* criticks; meaning such as Muretus, Scaliger, Casaubon, Salmasius, Spanheim, Bentley! When, had it not been for the deathless labours of such as these, the western world, at the revival of letters, had soon fallen back again into a state of ignorance and barbarity, as deplorable as that from which Providence had just redeemed it.

To conclude with an observation of a fine writer and great philosopher of our own; which I would gladly bind, though with all honour, as a phylactery, on the brow of every awful grammarian, to teach him at once the *use* and *limits* of his art: WORDS ARE THE MONEY OF FOOLS, AND THE COUNTERS OF WISE MEN.

DR. JOHNSON'S

P R E F A C E.⁴

THAT praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the

⁴ First printed in 1765.

present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance; all perhaps are more willing to honour past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance; and when he is dead, we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientifick, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; so in the productions of genius, nothing can be stiled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated

by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be with certainty determined that it was round or square; but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking, that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises therefore not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topick of merriment, or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply

any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have past through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakspeare has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakspeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the in-

fluence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakspeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakspeare with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakspeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and œconomical prudence. Yet his real power is not shewn in the splendor of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenor of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakspeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakspeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned

by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered, is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions, and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew, that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristical; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the

writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakspeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: even where the agency is super-natural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakspeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned; and it may be said, that he has not only shewn human nature as it acts in real exigences, but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of Shakspeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended, that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish

usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakspeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to shew an usurper and a murderer not only odious, but despicable; he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakspeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolick of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties, the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrors of distress, and some the gayeties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy*, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.⁵

Shakspeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by shewing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

⁵ From this remark it appears that Dr. Johnson was unacquainted with the *Cyclops* of Euripides. STEEVENS.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds, by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us, and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day, and comedies to-morrow.⁶

⁶ Thus, says Downes the Prompter, p. 22: "The tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* was made some time after [1662] into a tragi-comedy, by Mr. James Howard, he preserving Romeo and Juliet alive; so that when the tragedy was revived again, 'twas play'd alternately, tragical one day, and tragi-comical another, for several days together." STEEVENS.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra*, than in the history of *Richard the Second*. But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakspeare's mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakspeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two centinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable and useful; and the Gravediggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakspeare engaged in dramatick poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the publick judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor criticks of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: he therefore indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as Rymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but in his comick scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick, but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits, are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The

accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakspeare.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a style which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered; this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakspeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation: his characters are praised

as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakspeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall shew them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to shew in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting, which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and

apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothick mythology of fairies. Shakspeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.⁷

⁷ As a further extenuation of Shakspeare's error, it may be urged that he found the Gothick mythology of Fairies already incorporated with Greek and Roman story, by our early translators. Phaer and Golding, who first gave us Virgil and Ovid in an English dress, introduce Fairies almost as often as Nymphs are mentioned in these classick authors. Neither are our ancient versifiers less culpable on the score of anachronisms. Under their hands the *balista* becomes a *cannon*, and other modern instruments are perpetually substituted for such as were the produce of the remotest ages. STEEVENS.

In his comick scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality, and reserve, yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gaiety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion, which exigence forces out, are for the most part striking and energetick; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakspeare found it an encumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick

writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to shew how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate, the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He is not long soft and pathetick without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to Shakspeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations

are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchainning it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and of criticks.

For his other deviations from the art of writing, I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence; that his virtues be rated with his failings: but, from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood, that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an

intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled; he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakspeare is the poet of nature: but his plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shewn no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of Corneille, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The criticks hold it impossible, that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator,

who knows that he saw the first act at Alexandria, cannot suppose that he sees the next at Rome, at a distance to which not the dragons of Medea could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place; and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was Thebes can never be Persepolis.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time therefore to tell him, by the authority of Shakspeare, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes, that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of

empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They come to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre.

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions, and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first; if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time, is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination;

a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider, how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of *Henry the Fifth*, yet no man takes his book for the field of Agincourt. A dramatick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The

humour of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of Cato?

A play read, affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident, that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows, that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether Shakspeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to enquire. We may reasonably suppose, that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and criticks, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable, but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented, that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive, become the comprehensive genius of Shakspeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire:

“ Non usque adeo permiscuit imis

“ Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli

“ Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.”

Yet when I speak thus flightly of dramatick rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my enquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama, that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play, written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown, rather what is possible, than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength; but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature, and instruct life.

Perhaps, what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frightened at my own temerity; and when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence; as Æneas withdrew from the defence of Troy, when he saw Neptune shaking the wall, and Juno heading the besiegers.

Those whom my arguments cannot persuade to give their approbation to the judgment of Shakspeare, will easily, if they consider the condition of his life, make some allowance for his ignorance.

Every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities; and though to a reader a book be not worse or better for the circumstances of the author, yet as there is always a silent reference of human works to human abilities, and as the enquiry, how far man may extend his designs, or how high he may rate his native force, is of far greater dignity than in what rank we shall place any particular performance, curiosity is always busy to discover the instruments, as well as to survey the workmanship, to know how much is to be ascribed to original powers, and how much to casual and adventitious help. The palaces of Peru or Mexico were certainly mean and incommodious habitations, if compared to the houses of European monarchs; yet who could forbear to view them with astonishment, who remembered that they were built without the use of iron?

The English nation, in the time of Shakspeare, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity. The philology of Italy had been transplanted hither in the reign of Henry the Eighth; and the learned languages had been successfully cultivated by Lilly, Linacre, and More; by Pole, Cheke, and Gardiner; and afterwards by Smith, Clerk, Haddon, and Ascham. Greek was now taught to boys in the principal schools; and those who united elegance with learning, read, with great diligence, the Italian and Spanish poets. But literature was yet confined to professed scholars, or to men and

women of high rank. The publick was gross and dark; and to be able to read and write, was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance. Whatever is remote from common appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. *The Death of Arthur* was the favourite volume.

The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste of the insipidity of truth. A play, which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of *Palmerin* and *Guy of Warwick*, have made little impression; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions, and that incredibility, by which maturer knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings, to unskilful curiosity.

Our author's plots are generally borrowed from novels; and it is reasonable to suppose, that he chose the most popular, such as were read by many, and related by more; for his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.

The stories, which we now find only in remoter authors, were in his time accessible and familiar. The fable of *As you like it*, which is supposed to be copied from Chaucer's *Gamelyn*, was a little pam-

phlet of those times ; and old Mr. Cibber remembered the tale of *Hamlet* in plain English prose, which the criticks have now to seek in *Saxo Grammaticus*.

His English histories he took from English chronicles and English ballads ; and as the ancient writers were made known to his countrymen by versions, they supplied him with new subjects ; he dilated some of Plutarch's lives into plays, when they had been translated by North.

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crowded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation ; and such is the power of the marvellous, even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakspeare than of any other writer ; others please us by particular speeches, but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has perhaps excelled all but Homer in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through.

The shows and bustle with which his plays abound have the same original. As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear, but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye. Those to whom our author's labours were exhibited had more skill in pomps or processions than in poetical language, and perhaps wanted some visible and discriminated events, as comments on the dialogue. He knew how he should most please ; and whether his practice is more agreeable to nature, or whether his example has prejudiced the nation, we still find that on our stage something must be done as well as said, and inactive decla-

mation is very coldly heard, however musical or elegant, passionate or sublime.

Voltaire expresses his wonder, that our author's extravagancies are endured by a nation, which has seen the tragedy of *Cato*. Let him be answered, that Addison speaks the language of poets, and Shakspeare, of men. We find in *Cato* innumerable beauties which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning; but *Othello* is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. *Cato* affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of *Cato*, but we think on *Addison*.

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented with flowers; the composition of Shakspeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished into brightness. Shakspeare opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner minerals.

It has been much disputed, whether Shakspeare owed his excellence to his own native force, or whether he had the common helps of scholastick education, the precepts of critical science, and the examples of ancient authors.

There has always prevailed a tradition, that Shakspeare wanted learning, that he had no regular education, nor much skill in the dead languages. Jonson, his friend, affirms, that *he had small Latin, and less Greek*; who, besides that he had no imaginable temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of Shakspeare were known to multitudes. His evidence ought therefore to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed.

Some have imagined, that they have discovered deep learning in imitations of old writers; but the examples which I have known urged, were drawn from books translated in his time; or were such easy coincidences of thought, as will happen to all who consider the same subjects; or such remarks on life or axioms of morality as float in conversation, and are transmitted through the world in proverbial sentences.

I have found it remarked, that, in this important sentence, *Go before, I'll follow*, we read a translation of, *I prae, sequar*. I have been told, that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says, *I cry'd to sleep again*, the author imitates Anacreon, who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.

There are a few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few, that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication, and as he used what he had, would have used more if he had obtained it.

The *Comedy of Errors* is confessedly taken from the *Menæchmi* of *Plautus*; from the only play of *Plautus* which was then in English. What can be more probable, than that he who copied that, would have copied more; but that those which were not translated were inaccessible?

Whether he knew the modern languages is uncertain. That his plays have some French scenes proves but little; he might easily procure them to be written, and probably, even though he had known the language in the common degree, he could not have written it without assistance. In the story of *Romeo and Juliet* he is observed to have followed the English translation, where it deviates from the Italian; but this on the other part proves nothing against his knowledge of the original. He was to copy, not what he knew himself, but what was known to his audience.

It is most likely that he had learned Latin sufficiently to make him acquainted with construction, but that he never advanced to an easy perusal of the Roman authors. Concerning his skill in modern languages, I can find no sufficient ground of determination; but as no imitations of French or Italian authors have been discovered, though the Italian poetry was then high in esteem, I am inclined to believe, that he read little more than English, and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.

That much knowledge is scattered over his works is very justly observed by Pope, but it is often such knowledge as books did not supply. He that will understand Shakspeare, must not be content to study him in the closet, he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.

There is however proof enough that he was a very diligent reader, nor was our language then so indigent of books, but that he might very liberally indulge his curiosity without excursion into foreign literature. Many of the Roman authors were translated, and some of the Greek; the Reformation had filled the kingdom with theological learning; most of the topics of human disquisition had found English writers; and poetry had been cultivated, not only with diligence, but success. This was a stock of knowledge sufficient for a mind so capable of appropriating and improving it.

But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the English stage in a state of the utmost rudeness; no essays either in tragedy or comedy had appeared, from which it could be discovered to what degree of delight either one or other might be carried. Neither character nor dialogue were yet understood. Shakspeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.

By what gradations of improvement he proceeded, is not easily known; for the chronology of his works is yet unsettled. Rowe is of opinion, that *perhaps we are not to look for his beginning, like those of other writers, in his least perfect works; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that for aught I know, says he, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, were the best.* But the power of nature is only the power of using to any certain purpose the materials which diligence procures, or opportunity supplies. Nature gives no man knowledge, and when images

are collected by study and experience, can only assist in combining or applying them. Shakspeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned; and as he must encrease his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better, as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.

There is a vigilance of observation and accuracy of distinction which books and precepts cannot confer; from this almost all original and native excellence proceeds. Shakspeare must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our author had both matter and form to provide; for, except the characters of Chaucer, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in English, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which shewed life in its native colours.

The contest about the original benevolence or malignity of man had not yet commenced. Speculation had not yet attempted to analyse the mind, to trace the passions to their sources, to unfold the seminal principles of vice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action. All those enquiries, which from that time that human nature became the fashionable study, have been made sometimes with nice discernment, but often with idle subtilty, were yet unattempted. The tales, with which the infancy of learning was satisfied, exhibited only the superficial appearances of action, related the events, but omitted the

causes, and were formed for such as delighted in wonders rather than in truth. Mankind was not then to be studied in the closet; he that would know the world, was under the necessity of glean-
ing his own remarks, by mingling as he could in its business and amusements.

Boyle congratulated himself upon his high birth, because it favoured his curiosity, by facilitating his access. Shakspeare had no such advantage; he came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments. Many works of genius and learning have been performed in states of life that appear very little favourable to thought or to enquiry; so many, that he who considers them is inclined to think that he sees enterprise and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them. The genius of Shakspeare was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty, nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the incumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, *as dew-drops from a lion's mane.*

Though he had so many difficulties to encounter, and so little assistance to surmount them, he has been able to obtain an exact knowledge of many modes of life, and many casts of native dispositions; to vary them with great multiplicity; to mark them by nice distinctions; and to show them in full view by proper combinations. In this part of his performances he had none to imitate, but has himself been imitated by all succeeding writers; and it may be doubted, whether from all his successors more maxims of theoretical knowledge, or more rules of practical prudence, can be collected, than he alone has given to his country.

Nor was his attention confined to the actions of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. It may be observed, that the oldest poets of many nations preserve their reputation, and that the following generations of wit, after a short celebrity, sink into oblivion. The first, whoever they be, must take their sentiments and descriptions immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is therefore just, their descriptions are verified by every eye, and their sentiments acknowledged by every breast. Those whom their fame invites to the same studies, copy partly them, and partly nature, till the books of one age gain such authority, as to stand in the place of nature to another, and imitation, always deviating a little, becomes at last capricious and casual. Shakspeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shews plainly, that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are complete.

Perhaps it would not be easy to find any author, except Homer, who invented so much as Shakspeare, who so much advanced the studies which he cultivated, or effused so much novelty upon his age or country. The form, the character, the language, and the shows of the English drama are his. *He seems, says Dennis, to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by dissyllable and trissyllable terminations. For the diversity distinguishes it from heroick harmony, and by bringing it nearer to common use makes it more proper to gain at-*

tention, and more fit for action and dialogue. Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation.

I know not whether this praise is rigorously just. The dissyllable termination, which the critick rightly appropriates to the drama, is to be found, though, I think, not in *Gorboduc*, which is confessedly before our author; yet in *Hieronymo*,⁸ of which the date is not certain, but which there is reason to believe at least as old as his earliest plays. This however is certain, that he is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.

To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of Rowe, without his effeminacy. He endeavours indeed commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue, but he never executes his purpose better, than when he tries to sooth by softness.

Yet it must be at last confessed, that as we owe every thing to him, he owes something to us; that, if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgment, much is likewise given by custom and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and

⁸ It appears from the induction of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, to have been acted before the year 1590. See also Vol. VIII. p. 6, n. 4. STEEVENS.

turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another loath or despise. If we endured without praising, respect for the father of our drama might excuse us; but I have seen, in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anomalies, which show that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour.

He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence, but perhaps not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion. I am indeed far from thinking, that his works were wrought to his own ideas of perfection; when they were such as would satisfy the audience, they satisfied the writer. It is seldom that authors, though more studious of fame than Shakspeare, rise much above the standard of their own age; to add a little to what is best will always be sufficient for present praise, and those who find themselves exalted into fame, are willing to credit their encomiasts, and to spare the labour of contending with themselves.

It does not appear, that Shakspeare thought his works worthy of posterity, that he levied any ideal tribute upon future times, or had any further prospect, than of present popularity and present profit. When his plays had been acted, his hope was at an end; he solicited no addition of honour from the reader. He therefore made no scruple to repeat the same jests in many dialogues, or to entangle different plots by the same knot of perplexity, which may be at least forgiven him, by those who recollect, that of Congreve's four comedies, two are concluded by a marriage in a mask, by a deception, which perhaps never happened,

and which, whether likely or not, he did not invent.

So careless was this great poet of future fame, that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was yet little *declined into the vale of years*, before he could be disgusted with fatigue, or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been already published from the depravations that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny, by giving them to the world in their genuine state.

Of the plays which bear the name of Shakspeare in the late editions, the greater part were not published till about seven years after his death, and the few which appeared in his life are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the author, and therefore probably without his knowledge.

Of all the publishers, clandestine or professed, the negligence and unskilfulness has by the late revisers been sufficiently shown. The faults of all are indeed numerous and gross, and have not only corrupted many passages perhaps beyond recovery, but have brought others into suspicion, which are only obscured by obsolete phraseology, or by the writer's unskilfulness and affectation. To alter is more easy than to explain, and temerity is a more common quality than diligence. Those who saw that they must employ conjecture to a certain degree, were willing to indulge it a little further. Had the author published his own works, we should have sat quietly down to disentangle his intricacies, and clear his obscurities; but now we tear what we cannot loose, and eject what we happen not to understand.

The faults are more than could have happened without the concurrence of many causes. The style of Shakspeare was in itself ungrammatical,

perplexed, and obscure; his works were transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errors; they were perhaps sometimes mutilated by the actors, for the sake of shortening the speeches; and were at last printed without correction of the press.⁹

In this state they remained, not as Dr. Warburton supposes, because they were unregarded, but because the editor's art was not yet applied to modern languages, and our ancestors were accustomed to so much negligence of English printers, that they could very patiently endure it. At last an edition was undertaken by Rowe; not because a poet was to be published by a poet, for Rowe seems to have thought very little on correction or explanation, but that our author's works might appear like those of his fraternity, with the appendages of a life and commendatory preface. Rowe has been clamorously blamed for not performing what he did not

⁹ Much deserved censure has been thrown out on the carelessness of our ancient printers, as well as on the wretched transcripts they obtained from contemporary theatres. Yet I cannot help observing that, even at this instant, should any one undertake to publish a play of Shakspeare from pages of no greater fidelity than such as are issued out for the use of performers, the press would teem with as interpolated and inextricable nonsense as it produced above a century ago. Mr. Colman (who cannot be suspected of ignorance or misrepresentation) in his preface to the last edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, very forcibly styles the prompter's books "the most inaccurate and barbarous of all manuscripts." And well may they deserve that character; for verse (as I am informed) still continues to be transcribed as prose by a set of mercenaries, who in general have neither the advantage of literature or understanding. *Folius tantum ne carmina manda, ne turbata volent ludibria*, was the request of Virgil's Hero to the Sybil, and should also be the supplication of every dramatick poet to the agents of a prompter.

undertake, and it is time that justice be done him, by confessing, that though he seems to have had no thought of corruption beyond the printer's errors, yet he has made many emendations, if they were not made before, which his successors have received without acknowledgment, and which, if they had produced them, would have filled pages and pages with censures of the stupidity by which the faults were committed, with displays of the absurdities which they involved, with ostentatious expositions of the new reading, and self-congratulations on the happiness of discovering it.

As of the other editors I have preserved the prefaces, I have likewise borrowed the author's life from Rowe, though not written with much elegance or spirit; it relates however what is now to be known, and therefore deserves to pass through all succeeding publications.

The nation had been for many years content enough with Mr. Rowe's performance, when Mr. Pope made them acquainted with the true state of Shakspeare's text, showed that it was extremely corrupt, and gave reason to hope that there were means of reforming it. He collated the old copies, which none had thought to examine before, and restored many lines to their integrity; but, by a very compendious criticism, he rejected whatever he disliked, and thought more of amputation than of cure.

I know not why he is commended by Dr. Warburton for distinguishing the genuine from the spurious plays. In this choice he exerted no judgment of his own; the plays which he received, were given to Hemings and Condell, the first editors; and those which he rejected, though, according to the licentiousness of the press in those times, they were printed during Shakspeare's life, with

his name, had been omitted by his friends, and were never added to his works before the edition of 1664, from which they were copied by the later printers.

This was a work which Pope seems to have thought unworthy of his abilities, being not able to suppress his contempt of *the dull duty of an editor*. He understood but half his undertaking. The duty of a collator is indeed dull, yet, like other tedious tasks is very necessary; but an emendatory critick would ill discharge his duty, without qualities very different from dullness. In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language. Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his author's particular cast of thought and turn of expression. Such must be his knowledge, and such his taste. Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise, has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor.

Confidence is the common consequence of success. They whose excellence of any kind has been loudly celebrated, are ready to conclude, that their powers are universal. Pope's edition fell below his own expectations, and he was so much offended, when he was found to have left any thing for others to do, that he passed the latter part of his life in a state of hostility with verbal criticism.

I have retained all his notes, that no fragment of so great a writer may be lost; his preface, valuable alike for elegance of composition and just-

ness of remark, and containing a general criticism on his author, so extensive that little can be added, and so exact, that little can be disputed, every editor has an interest to suppress, but that every reader would demand its insertion.

Pope was succeeded by Theobald, a man of narrow comprehension, and small acquisitions, with no native and intrinsic splendor of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning, but zealous for minute accuracy, and not negligent in pursuing it. He collated the ancient copies, and rectified many errors. A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more, but what little he did was commonly right.

In his reports of copies and editions he is not to be trusted without examination. He speaks sometimes indefinitely of copies, when he has only one. In his enumeration of editions, he mentions the two first folios as of high, and the third folio as of middle authority; but the truth is, that the first is equivalent to all others, and that the rest only deviate from it by the printer's negligence. Whoever has any of the folios has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first.

Of his notes I have generally retained those which he retained himself in his second edition, except when they were confuted by subsequent annotators, or were too minute to merit preservation. I have sometimes adopted his restoration of a comma, without inserting the panegyrick in which he celebrated himself for his achievement. The exuberant excrescence of his diction I have often lopped, his triumphant exultations over Pope and Rowe I have sometimes suppressed, and his contemptible ostentation, I have frequently con-

ceased; but I have in some places shewn him, as he would have shewn himself, for the reader's diversion, that the inflated emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.

Theobald, thus weak and ignorant, thus mean and faithless, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having Pope for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped alone, with reputation, from this undertaking. So willingly does the world support those who solicit favour, against those who command reverence; and so easily is he praised, whom no man can envy.

Our author fell then into the hands of Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Oxford editor, a man, in my opinion, eminently qualified by nature for such studies. He had, what is the first requisite to emendatory criticism, that intuition by which the poet's intention is immediately discovered, and that dexterity of intellect which despatches its work by the easiest means. He had undoubtedly read much; his acquaintance with customs, opinions, and traditions, seems to have been large; and he is often learned without show. He seldom passes what he does not understand, without an attempt to find or to make a meaning, and sometimes hastily makes what a little more attention would have found. He is solicitous to reduce to grammar, what he could not be sure that his author intended to be grammatical. Shakspeare regarded more the series of ideas, than of words; and his language, not being designed for the reader's desk, was all that he desired it to be, if it conveyed his meaning to the audience.

Hanmer's care of the metre has been too violently censured. He found the measure reformed in so many passages, by the silent labours of some

editors, with the silent acquiescence of the rest, that he thought himself allowed to extend a little further the licence, which had already been carried so far without reprehension; and of his corrections in general, it must be confessed, that they are often just, and made commonly with the least possible violation of the text.

But, by inserting his emendations, whether invented or borrowed, into the page, without any notice of varying copies, he has appropriated the labour of his predecessors, and made his own edition of little authority. His confidence indeed, both in himself and others, was too great; he supposes all to be right that was done by Pope and Theobald; he seems not to suspect a critick of fallibility, and it was but reasonable that he should claim what he so liberally granted.

As he never writes without careful enquiry and diligent consideration, I have received all his notes, and believe that every reader will wish for more.

Of the last editor it is more difficult to speak. Respect is due to high place, tenderness to living reputation, and veneration to genius and learning; but he cannot be justly offended at that liberty of which he has himself so frequently given an example, nor very solicitous what is thought of notes, which he ought never to have considered as part of his serious employments, and which, I suppose, since the ardour of composition is remitted, he no longer numbers among his happy effusions.

The original and predominant error of his commentary, is acquiescence in his first thoughts; that precipitation which is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labour only can perform, by penetrating the

bottom. His notes exhibit sometimes perverse interpretations, and sometimes improbable conjectures; he at one time gives the author more profundity of meaning than the sentence admits, and at another discovers absurdities, where the sense is plain to every other reader. But his emendations are likewise often happy and just; and his interpretation of obscure passages learned and sagacious.

Of his notes, I have commonly rejected those, against which the general voice of the publick has exclaimed, or which their own incongruity immediately condemns, and which, I suppose the author himself would desire to be forgotten. Of the rest, to part I have given the highest approbation, by inserting the offered reading in the text; part I have left to the judgment of the reader, as doubtful, though specious; and part I have censured without reserve, but I am sure without bitterness of malice, and, I hope, without wantonness of insult.

It is no pleasure to me, in revising my volumes, to observe how much paper is wasted in confutation. Whoever considers the revolutions of learning, and the various questions of greater or less importance, upon which wit and reason have exercised their powers, must lament the unsuccessfulness of enquiry, and the slow advances of truth, when he reflects, that great part of the labour of every writer is only the destruction of those that went before him. The first care of the builder of a new system, is to demolish the fabricks which are standing. The chief desire of him that comments an author, is to show how much other commentators have corrupted and obscured him. The opinions prevalent in one age, as truths above the reach of controversy, are confuted and rejected in

another, and rise again to reception in remoter times. Thus the human mind is kept in motion without progress. Thus sometimes truth and error, and sometimes contrarieties of error, take each other's place by reciprocal invasion. The tide of seeming knowledge which is poured over one generation, retires and leaves another naked and barren; the sudden meteors of intelligence, which for a while appear to shoot their beams into the regions of obscurity, on a sudden withdraw their lustre, and leave mortals again to grope their way.

These elevations and depressions of renown, and the contradictions to which all improvers of knowledge must for ever be exposed, since they are not escaped by the highest and brightest of mankind, may surely be endured with patience by criticks and annotators, who can rank themselves but as the satellites of their authors. How canst thou beg for life, says Homer's hero to his captive, when thou knowest that thou art now to suffer only what must another day be suffered by Achilles?

Dr. Warburton had a name sufficient to confer celebrity on those who could exalt themselves into antagonists, and his notes have raised a clamour too loud to be distinct. His chief assailants are the authors of *The canons of criticism*, and of *The revisal of Shakspeare's text*; of whom one ridicules his errors with airy petulance, suitable enough to the levity of the controversy; the other attacks them with gloomy malignity, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. The one stings like a fly, sucks a little blood, takes a gay flutter, and returns for more; the other bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and

gangrene behind him. When I think on one, with his confederates, I remember the danger of Coriolanus, who was afraid that *girls with spits, and boys with stones, should slay him in puny battle*; when the other crosses my imagination, I remember the prodigy in *Macbeth*:

“ A falcon tow’ring in his pride of place,
“ Was by a mousing owl hawk’d at and kill’d.”

Let me however do them justice. One is a wit, and one a scholar.² They have both shewn acuteness sufficient in the discovery of faults, and have both advanced some probable interpretations of obscure passages; but when they aspire to conjecture and emendation, it appears how falsely we all estimate our own abilities, and the little which they have been able to perform might have taught them more candour to the endeavours of others.

Before Dr. Warburton’s edition, *Critical Observations on Shakspeare* had been published by Mr. Upton,³ a man skilled in languages, and acquainted with books, but who seems to have had no great vigour of genius or nicety of taste. Many of his explanations are curious and useful, but he likewise, though he professed to oppose the licentious confidence of editors, and adhere to the old copies, is unable to restrain the rage of emendation, though his ardour is ill seconded by his skill. Every cold empirick, when his heart is expanded

² It is extraordinary that this gentleman should attempt so voluminous a work, as the *Revival of Shakspeare’s text*, when he tells us in his preface, “ he was not so fortunate as to be furnished with either of the folio editions, much less any of the ancient quartos: and even Sir Thomas Hanmer’s performance was known to him only by Dr. Warburton’s representation.” FARMER.

³ Republished by him in 1748, after Dr. Warburton’s edition, with alterations, &c. STEEVENS.

by a successful experiment, swells into a theorist, and the laborious collator at some unlucky moment frolics in conjecture.

Critical, historical, and explanatory notes have been likewise published upon Shakspeare by Dr. Grey, whose diligent perusal of the old English writers has enabled him to make some useful observations. What he undertook he has well enough performed, but as he neither attempts judicial nor emendatory criticism, he employs rather his memory than his sagacity. It were to be wished that all would endeavour to imitate his modesty, who have not been able to surpass his knowledge.

I can say with great sincerity of all my predecessors, what I hope will hereafter be said of me, that not one has left Shakspeare without improvement, nor is there one to whom I have not been indebted for assistance and information. Whatever I have taken from them, it was my intention to refer to its original author, and it is certain, that what I have not given to another, I believed when I wrote it to be my own. In some perhaps I have been anticipated; but if I am ever found to encroach upon the remarks of any other commentator, I am willing that the honour, be it more or less, should be transferred to the first claimant, for his right, and his alone, stands above dispute; the second can prove his pretensions only to himself, nor can himself always distinguish invention, with sufficient certainty, from recollection.

They have all been treated by me with candour, which they have not been careful of observing to one another. It is not easy to discover from what cause the acrimony of a scholiast can naturally proceed. The subjects to be discussed by him are of very small importance; they involve neither

property nor liberty; nor favour the interest of sect or party. The various readings of copies, and different interpretations of a passage, seem to be questions that might exercise the wit, without engaging the passions. But whether it be, that *small things make mean men proud*, and vanity catches small occasions; or that all contrariety of opinion, even in those that can defend it no longer, makes proud men angry; there is often found in commentaries a spontaneous strain of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politicks against those whom he is hired to defame.

Perhaps the lightness of the matter may conduce to the vehemence of the agency; when the truth to be investigated is so near to inexistence, as to escape attention, its bulk is to be enlarged by rage and exclamation: that to which all would be indifferent in its original state, may attract notice when the fate of a name is appended to it. A commentator has indeed great temptations to supply by turbulence what he wants of dignity, to beat his little gold to a spacious surface, to work that to foam which no art or diligence can exalt to spirit.

The notes which I have borrowed or written are either illustrative, by which difficulties are explained; or judicial, by which faults and beauties are remarked; or emendatory, by which depravations are corrected.

The explanations transcribed from others, if I do not subjoin any other interpretation, I suppose commonly to be right, at least I intend by acquiescence to confess, that I have nothing better to propose.

After the labours of all the editors, I found many passages which appeared to me likely to obstruct the greater number of readers, and thought

it my duty to facilitate their passage. It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative, and must be quietly endured. I have endeavoured to be neither superfluously copious, nor scrupulously reserved, and hope that I have made my author's meaning accessible to many, who before were frightened from perusing him, and contributed something to the publick, by diffusing innocent and rational pleasure.

The complete explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. All personal reflections, when names are suppressed, must be in a few years irrecoverably obliterated; and customs, too minute to attract the notice of law, such as modes of dress, formalities of conversation, rules of visits, disposition of furniture, and practices of ceremony, which naturally find places in familiar dialogue, are so fugitive and unsubstantial, that they are not easily retained or recovered. What can be known will be collected by chance, from the recesses of obscure and obsolete papers, perused commonly with some other view. Of this knowledge every man has some, and none has much; but when an author has engaged the publick attention, those who can add any thing to his illustration, communicate their discoveries, and time produces what had eluded diligence.

To time I have been obliged to resign many passages, which, though I did not understand them, will perhaps hereafter be explained, having, I hope, illustrated some, which others have neglected or mistaken, sometimes by short remarks, or marginal directions, such as every editor has added at his will, and often by comments more laborious than the matter will seem to deserve; but that which is most difficult is not always most important, and to an editor nothing is a trifle by which his author is obscured.

The poetical beauties or defects I have not been very diligent to observe. Some plays have more, and some fewer judicial observations, not in proportion to their difference of merit, but because I gave this part of my design to chance and to caprice. The reader, I believe, is seldom pleased to find his opinion anticipated; it is natural to delight more in what we find or make, than in what we receive. Judgment, like other faculties, is improved by practice, and its advancement is hindered by submission to dictatorial decisions, as the memory grows torpid by the use of a table-book. Some initiation is however necessary; of all skill, part is infused by precept, and part is obtained by habit; I have therefore shewn so much as may enable the candidate of criticism to discover the rest.

To the end of most plays I have added short strictures, containing a general censure of faults, or praise of excellence; in which I know not how much I have concurred with the current opinion; but I have not, by any affectation of singularity, deviated from it. Nothing is minutely and particularly examined, and therefore it is to be supposed, that in the plays which are condemned there is much to be praised, and in these which are praised much to be condemned.

The part of criticism in which the whole succession of editors has laboured with the greatest diligence, which has occasioned the most arrogant ostentation, and excited the keenest acrimony, is the emendation of corrupted passages, to which the publick attention having been first drawn by the violence of the contention between Pope and Theobald, has been continued by the persecution, which, with a kind of conspiracy, has been since raised against all the publishers of Shakspeare.

That many passages have passed in a state of depravation through all the editions is indubitably certain; of these the restoration is only to be attempted by collation of copies, or sagacity of conjecture. The collator's province is safe and easy, the conjecturer's perilous and difficult. Yet as the greater part of the plays are extant only in one copy, the peril must not be avoided, nor the difficulty refused.

Of the readings which this emulation of amendment has hitherto produced, some from the labours of every publisher I have advanced into the text; those are to be considered as in my opinion sufficiently supported; some I have rejected without mention, as evidently erroneous; some I have left in the notes without censure or approbation, as resting in equipoise between objection and defence; and some, which seemed specious but not right, I have inserted with a subsequent animadversion.

Having classed the observations of others, I was at last to try what I could substitute for their mistakes, and how I could supply their omissions. I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative. Of the editions which chance or kindness put into my hands

I have given an enumeration, that I may not be blamed for neglecting what I had not the power to do.

By examining the old copies, I soon found that the later publishers, with all their boasts of diligence, suffered many passages to stand unauthorized, and contented themselves with Rowe's regulation of the text, even where they knew it to be arbitrary, and with a little consideration might have found it to be wrong. Some of these alterations are only the ejection of a word for one that appeared to him more elegant or more intelligible. These corruptions I have often silently rectified; for the history of our language, and the true force of our words, can only be preserved, by keeping the text of authors free from adulteration. Others, and those very frequent, smoothed the cadence, or regulated the measure; on these I have not exercised the same rigour; if only a word was transposed, or a particle inserted or omitted, I have sometimes suffered the line to stand; for the inconstancy of the copies is such, as that some liberties may be easily permitted. But this practice I have not suffered to proceed far, having restored the primitive diction wherever it could for any reason be preferred.

The emendations, which comparison of copies supplied, I have inserted in the text; sometimes, where the improvement was slight, without notice, and sometimes with an account of the reasons of the change.

Conjecture, though it be sometimes unavoidable, I have not wantonly nor licentiously indulged. It has been my settled principle, that the reading of the ancient books is probably true, and therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of elegance, perspicuity, or mere improvement of the sense.

For though much credit is not due to the fidelity, nor any to the judgment of the first publishers, yet they who had the copy before their eyes were more likely to read it right, than we who read it only by imagination. But it is evident that they have often made strange mistakes by ignorance or negligence, and that therefore something may be properly attempted by criticism, keeping the middle way between presumption and timidity.

Such criticism I have attempted to practise, and where any passage appeared inextricably perplexed, have endeavoured to discover how it may be recalled to sense, with least violence. But my first labour is, always to turn the old text on every side, and try if there be any interstice, through which light can find its way; nor would Huetius himself condemn me, as refusing the trouble of research, for the ambition of alteration. In this modest industry I have not been unsuccessful. I have rescued many lines from the violations of temerity, and secured many scenes from the inroads of correction. I have adopted the Roman sentiment, that it is more honourable to save a citizen, than to kill an enemy, and have been more careful to protect than to attack.

I have preserved the common distribution of the plays into acts, though I believe it to be in almost all the plays void of authority. Some of those which are divided in the later editions have no division in the first folio, and some that are divided in the folio have no division in the preceding copies. The settled mode of the theatre requires four intervals in the play, but few, if any, of our author's compositions can be properly distributed in that manner. An act is so much of the drama as passes without intervention of time, or change of place. A pause makes a new act. In every

real, and therefore in every imitative action, the intervals may be more or fewer, the restriction of five acts being accidental and arbitrary. This Shakspeare knew, and this he practised; his plays were written, and at first printed in one unbroken continuity, and ought now to be exhibited with short pauses, interposed as often as the scene is changed, or any considerable time is required to pass. This method would at once quell a thousand absurdities.

In restoring the author's works to their integrity, I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power; for what could be their care of colons and commas, who corrupted words and sentences. Whatever could be done by adjusting points, is therefore silently performed, in some plays, with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth.

The same liberty has been taken with a few particles, or other words of slight effect. I have sometimes inserted or omitted them without notice. I have done that sometimes, which the other editors have done always, and which indeed the state of the text may sufficiently justify.

The greater part of readers, instead of blaming us for passing trifles, will wonder that on mere trifles so much labour is expended, with such importance of debate, and such solemnity of diction. To these I answer with confidence, that they are judging of an art which they do not understand; yet cannot much reproach them with their ignorance, nor promise that they would become in general, by learning criticism, more useful, happier, or wiser.

As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less; and after I had printed a few plays, re-

solved to insert none of my own readings in the text. Upon this caution I now congratulate myself, for every day encreases my doubt of my emendations.

Since I have confined my imagination to the margin, it must not be considered as very reprehensible, if I have suffered it to play some freaks in its own dominion. There is no danger in conjecture, if it be proposed as conjecture; and while the text remains uninjured, those changes may be safely offered, which are not considered even by him that offers them as necessary or safe.

If my readings are of little value, they have not been ostentatiously displayed or importunately obtruded. I could have written longer notes, for the art of writing notes is not of difficult attainment. The work is performed, first by railing at the stupidity, negligence, ignorance, and asinine tastelessness of the former editors, and shewing, from all that goes before and all that follows, the inelegance and absurdity of the old reading; then by proposing something, which to superficial readers would seem specious, but which the editor rejects with indignation; then by producing the true reading, with a long paraphrase, and concluding with loud acclamations on the discovery, and a sober wish for the advancement and prosperity of genuine criticism.

All this may be done, and perhaps done sometimes without impropriety. But I have always suspected that the reading is right, which requires many words to prove it wrong; and the emendation wrong, that cannot without so much labour appear to be right. The justness of a happy restoration strikes at once, and the moral precept may be well applied to criticism, *quod dubitas ne feceris*.

To dread the shore which he sees spread with wrecks, is natural to the sailor. I had before my eye, so many critical adventures ended in miscarriage, that caution was forced upon me. I encountered in every page wit struggling with its own sophistry, and learning confused by the multiplicity of its views. I was forced to censure those whom I admired, and could not but reflect, while I was dispossessing their emendations, how soon the same fate might happen to my own, and how many of the readings which I have corrected may be by some other editor defended and established.

“ Criticks I saw, that other’s names efface,
 “ And fix their own, with labour, in the place;
 “ Their own, like others, soon their place resign’d,
 “ Or disappear’d, and left the first behind.” POPE.

That a conjectural critick should often be mistaken, cannot be wonderful, either to others or himself, if it be considered, that in his art there is no system, no principal and axiomatical truth that regulates subordinate positions. His chance of error is renewed at every attempt; an oblique view of the passage, a slight misapprehension of a phrase, a casual inattention to the parts connected, is sufficient to make him not only fail, but fail ridiculously; and when he succeeds best he produces perhaps but one reading of many probable, and he that suggests another will always be able to dispute his claims.

It is an unhappy state, in which danger is hid under pleasure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is too much delighted to consider what objections may rise against it.

Yet conjectural criticism has been of great use in the learned world; nor is it my intention to depreciate a study, that has exercised so many mighty minds, from the revival of learning to our own age, from the Bishop of Aleria⁴ to English Bentley. The criticks on ancient authors have, in the exercise of their sagacity, many assistances, which the editor of Shakspeare is condemned to want. They are employed upon grammatical and settled languages, whose construction contributes so much to perspicuity, that Homer has fewer passages unintelligible than Chaucer. The words have not only a known regimen, but invariable quantities, which direct and confine the choice. There are commonly more manuscripts than one; and they do not often conspire in the same mistakes. Yet Scaliger could confess to Salmasius how little satisfaction his emendations gave him. *Illudunt nobis conjecturæ nostræ, quarum nos pudet, posteaquam in meliores codices incidimus.* And Lipsius could complain, that criticks were making faults, by trying to remove them, *Ut olim vitiis, ita nunc remediis laboratur.* And indeed, where mere conjecture is to be used, the emendations of Scaliger and Lipsius, notwithstanding their wonderful sagacity and erudition, are often vague and disputable, like mine or Theobald's.

⁴ ——— *the bishop of Aleria* —] John André. He was secretary to the Vatican Library during the papacies of Paul II. and Sixtus IV. By the former he was employed to superintend such works as were to be multiplied by the new art of printing, at that time brought into Rome. He published Herodotus, Strabo, Livy, Aulus Gellius, &c. His schoolfellow, Cardinal de Cusa, procured him the bishoprick of Accia, a province in Corsica; and Paul II. afterwards appointed him to that of *Aleria* in the same island, where he died in 1493. STEEVENS.

Perhaps I may not be more censured for doing wrong, than for doing little; for raising in the publick expectations, which at last I have not answered. The expectation of ignorance is indefinite, and that of knowledge is often tyrannical. It is hard to satisfy those who know not what to demand, or those who demand by design what they think impossible to be done. I have indeed disappointed no opinion more than my own; yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate. In many I have failed like others; and from many, after all my efforts, I have retreated, and confessed the repulse. I have not passed over, with affected superiority, what is equally difficult to the reader and to myself, but where I could not instruct him, have owned my ignorance. I might easily have accumulated a mass of seeming learning upon easy scenes; but it ought not to be imputed to negligence, that, where nothing was necessary, nothing has been done, or that, where others have said enough, I have said no more.

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him, that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakspeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play, from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and of Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through

integrity and corruption ; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.

Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption ; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject ; the reader is weary, he suspects not why ; and at last throws away the book which he has too diligently studied.

Parts are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed ; there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary for the comprehension of any great work in its full design and in its true proportions ; a close approach shows the smaller niceties, but the beauty of the whole is discerned no longer.

It is not very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him ; while the reading was yet not rectified, nor his allusions understood ; yet then did Dryden pronounce, " that Shakspeare was the man, who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily : when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those, who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation ; he was naturally learned ; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature ; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike ; were he so, I should

do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat and insipid; his comick wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him: no man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

‘ *Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.*’

It is to be lamented, that such a writer should want a commentary; that his language should become obsolete, or his sentiments obscure. But it is vain to carry wishes beyond the condition of human things; that which must happen to all, has happened to Shakspeare, by accident and time; and more than has been suffered by any other writer since the use of types, has been suffered by him through his own negligence of fame, or perhaps by that superiority of mind, which despised its own performances, when it compared them with its powers, and judged those works unworthy to be preserved, which the criticks of following ages were to contend for the fame of restoring and explaining.

Among these candidates of inferior fame, I am now to stand the judgment of the publick; and wish that I could confidently produce my commentary as equal to the encouragement which I have had the honour of receiving. Every work of this kind is by its nature deficient, and I should feel little solicitude about the sentence, were it to be pronounced only by the skilful and the learned.

Of what has been performed in this revival;⁵ an

⁵ This paragraph relates to the edition published in 1773, by George Steevens, Esq. MALONE.

account is given in the following pages by Mr. Steevens, who might have spoken both of his own diligence and sagacity, in terms of greater self-approbation, without deviating from modesty or truth.⁶ JOHNSON.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

[Prefixed to Mr. STEEVENS's Edition of Twenty of the old Quarto Copies of SHAKSPEARE, &c. in 4 Vols. 8vo. 1766.]

THE plays of Shakspeare have been so often republished, with every seeming advantage which the joint labours of men of the first abilities could procure for them, that one would hardly imagine they could stand in need of any thing beyond the illustration of some few dark passages. Modes of expression must remain in obscurity, or be retrieved from time to time, as chance may throw the books of that age into the hands of criticks who shall make a proper use of them. Many have been of opinion that his language will

⁶ All prefatory matters being in the present edition printed according to the order of time in which they originally appeared; the Advertisement Dr. Johnson refers to, will be found immediately after *Mr. Capell's Introduction*. STEEVENS.

continue difficult to all those who are unacquainted with the provincial expressions which they suppose him to have used; yet, for my own part, I cannot believe but that those which are now local may once have been universal, and must have been the language of those persons before whom his plays were represented. However, it is certain, that the instances of obscurity from this source are very few.

Some have been of opinion that even a particular syntax prevailed in the time of Shakspeare; but, as I do not recollect that any proofs were ever brought in support of that sentiment, I own I am of the contrary opinion.

In his time indeed a different arrangement of syllables had been introduced in imitation of the Latin, as we find in Ascham; and the verb was frequently kept back in the sentence; but in Shakspeare no marks of it are discernible: and though the rules of syntax were more strictly observed by the writers of that age than they have been since, he of all the number is perhaps the most ungrammatical. To make his meaning intelligible to his audience seems to have been his only care, and with the ease of conversation he has adopted its incorrectness.

The past editors, eminently qualified as they were by genius and learning for this undertaking, wanted industry; to cover which they published catalogues, transcribed at random, of a greater number of old copies than ever they can be supposed to have had in their possession; when, at the same time, they never examined the few which we know they had, with any degree of accuracy. The last editor alone has dealt fairly with the world in this particular; he professes to have made use of no more than he had really seen, and has annexed

a list of such to every play, together with a complete one of those supposed to be in being, at the conclusion of his work, whether he had been able to procure them for the service of it or not.

For these reasons I thought it would not be unacceptable to the lovers of Shakspeare to collate all the quartos I could find, comparing one copy with the rest, where there were more than one of the same play; and to multiply the chances of their being preserved, by collecting them into volumes, instead of leaving the few that have escaped, to share the fate of the rest, which was probably hastened by their remaining in the form of pamphlets, their use and value being equally unknown to those into whose hands they fell.

Of some I have printed more than one copy; as there are many persons, who, not contented with the possession of a finished picture of some great master, are desirous to procure the first sketch that was made for it, that they may have the pleasure of tracing the progress of the artist from the first light colouring to the finishing stroke. To such the earlier editions of *King John*, *Henry the Fifth*, *Henry the Sixth*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, will, I apprehend, not be unwelcome; since in these we may discern as much as will be found in the hasty outlines of the pencil, with a fair prospect of that perfection to which he brought every performance he took the pains to retouch.

The general character of the quarto editions may more advantageously be taken from the words of Mr. Pope, than from any recommendation of my own.

“ The folio edition (says he) in which all the plays we now receive as his were first collected, was published by two players, Heminges and Con-

dell, in 1623, seven years after his decease. They declare that all the other editions were stolen and surreptitious,⁶ and affirm theirs to be purged from the errors of the former. This is true as to the literal errors, and no other; for in all respects else it is far worse than the quartos.

“First, because the additions of trifling and bombast passages are in this edition far more numerous. For whatever had been added since those quartos by the actors, or had stolen from their mouths into the written parts, were from thence conveyed into the printed text, and all stand charged upon the author. He himself complained of this usage in *Hamlet*, where he wishes *those who play the clowns would speak no more than is set down for them*, (Act III. sc. iv.) But as a proof that he could not escape it, in the old editions of *Romeo and Juliet*, there is no hint of the mean conceits and ribaldries now to be found there. In others the scenes of the mobs, plebeians, and clowns, are vastly shorter than at present; and I have seen one in particular (which seems to have belonged to the play-house, by having the parts divided by lines, and the actors names in the margin) where several of those very passages were added in a written hand, which since are to be found in the folio.

In the next place, a number of beautiful passages were omitted, which were extant in the first single editions; as it seems without any other reason than their willingness to shorten some scenes.”

⁶ It may be proper on this occasion to observe, that the actors printed several of the plays in their folio edition from the very quarto copies which they are here striving to depreciate; and additional corruption is the utmost that these copies gained by passing through their hands.

To this I must add, that I cannot help looking on the folio as having suffered other injuries from the licentious alteration of the players; as we frequently find in it an unusual word changed into one more popular; sometimes to the weakening of the sense, which rather seems to have been their work, who knew that plainness was necessary for the audience of an illiterate age, than that it was done by the consent of the author: for he would hardly have unnerved a line in his written copy, which they pretend to have transcribed, however he might have permitted many to have been familiarized in the representation. Were I to indulge my own private conjecture, I should suppose that his blotted manuscripts were read over by one to another among those who were appointed to transcribe them; and hence it would easily happen, that words of similar sound, though of senses directly opposite, might be confounded with each other. They themselves declare that Shakspeare's time of blotting was past, and yet half the errors we find in their edition could not be merely typographical. Many of the quartos (as our own printers assure me) were far from being unskilfully executed, and some of them were much more correctly printed than the folio, which was published at the charge of the same proprietors, whose names we find prefixed to the older copies; and I cannot join with Mr. Pope in acquitting that edition of more literal errors than those which went before it. The particles in it seem to be as fortuitously disposed, and proper names as frequently undistinguished by Italick or capital letters from the rest of the text. The punctuation is equally accidental; nor do I see on the whole any greater marks of a skilful revisal, or the advantage of being printed from

unblotted originals in the one, than in the other. One reformation indeed there seems to have been made, and that very laudable; I mean the substitution of more general terms for a name too often unnecessarily invoked on the stage; but no jot of obscenity is omitted: and their caution against profaneness is, in my opinion, the only thing for which we are indebted to the judgment of the editors of the folio.⁷

How much may be done by the assistance of the old copies will now be easily known; but a more difficult task remains behind, which calls for other abilities than are requisite in the laborious collator.

From a diligent perusal of the comedies of contemporary authors, I am persuaded that the meaning of many expressions in Shakspeare might be retrieved; for the language of conversation can only be expected to be preserved in works, which in their time assumed the merit of being pictures of men and manners. The style of conversation we may suppose to be as much altered as that of books; and, in consequence of the change, we have no other authorities to recur to in either case. Should our language ever be recalled to a strict examination, and the fashion become general of striving to maintain our old acquisitions, instead of gaining new ones, which we shall be at last obliged to give up, or be incumbered with their

⁷ ——— *and their caution against profaneness is, in my opinion, the only thing for which we are indebted to the editors of the folio.*] I doubt whether we are so much indebted to the judgment of the editors of the folio edition, for their caution against profaneness, as to the statute 3 Jac. I. c. 21, which prohibits under severe penalties the use of the sacred name in any plays or interludes. This occasioned the playhouse copies to be altered, and they printed from the playhouse copies. BLACKSTONE.

weight; it will then be lamented that no regular collection was ever formed of the old English books; from which, as from ancient repositories, we might recover words and phrases as often as caprice or wantonness should call for variety; instead of thinking it necessary to adopt new ones, or barter solid strength for feeble splendour, which no language has long admitted, and retained its purity.

We wonder that, before the time of Shakspeare, we find the stage in a state so barren of productions, but forget that we have hardly any acquaintance with the authors of that period, though some few of their dramatick pieces may remain. The same might be almost said of the interval between that age and the age of Dryden, the performances of which, not being preserved in sets, or diffused as now, by the greater number printed, must lapse apace into the same obscurity.

“ Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona

“ Multi —————.”

And yet we are contented, from a few specimens only, to form our opinions of the genius of ages gone before us. Even while we are blaming the taste of that audience which received with applause the worst plays in the reign of Charles the Second, we should consider that the few in possession of our theatre, which would never have been heard a second time had they been written now, were probably the best of hundreds which had been dismissed with general censure. The collection of plays, interludes, &c. made by Mr. Garrick, with an intent to deposit them hereafter in some publick library,⁸ will be considered as a valuable

⁸ This collection is now, in pursuance of Mr. Garrick's Will, placed in the British Museum. REED.

acquisition; for pamphlets have never yet been examined with a proper regard to posterity. Most of the obsolete pieces will be found on enquiry to have been introduced into libraries but some few years since; and yet those of the present age, which may one time or other prove as useful, are still entirely neglected. I should be remiss, I am sure, were I to forget my acknowledgements to the gentleman I have just mentioned, to whose benevolence I owe the use of several of the scarcest quartos, which I could not otherwise have obtained; though I advertised for them, with sufficient offers, as I thought, either to tempt the casual owner to sell, or the curious to communicate them; but Mr. Garrick's zeal would not permit him to withhold any thing that might ever so remotely tend to shew the perfections of that author who could only have enabled him to display his own.

It is not merely to obtain justice to Shakspeare, that I have made this collection, and advise others to be made. The general interest of English literature, and the attention due to our own language and history, require that our ancient writings should be diligently reviewed. There is no age which has not produced some works that deserved to be remembered; and as words and phrases are only understood by comparing them in different places, the lower writers must be read for the explanation of the highest. No language can be ascertained and settled, but by deducing its words from their original sources, and tracing them through their successive varieties of signification; and this deduction can only be performed by consulting the earliest and intermediate authors.

Enough has been already done to encourage us to do more. Dr. Hickes, by reviving the study of the Saxon language, seems to have excited a stronger

curiosity after old English writers, than ever had appeared before. Many volumes which were mouldering in dust have been collected; many authors which were forgotten have been revived; many laborious catalogues have been formed; and many judicious glossaries compiled; the literary transactions of the darker ages are now open to discovery; and the language in its intermediate gradations, from the Conquest to the Restoration, is better understood than in any former time.

To incite the continuance, and encourage the extension of this domestick curiosity, is one of the purposes of the present publication. In the plays it contains, the poet's first thoughts as well as words are preserved; the additions made in subsequent impressions, distinguished in Italicks, and the performances themselves make their appearance with every typographical error, such as they were before they fell into the hands of the player-editors. The various readings, which can only be attributed to chance, are set down among the rest, as I did not choose arbitrarily to determine for others which were useless, or which were valuable. And many words differing only by the spelling, or serving merely to show the difficulties which they to whose lot it first fell to disentangle their perplexities must have encountered, are exhibited with the rest. I must acknowledge that some few readings have slipped in by mistake, which can pretend to serve no purpose of illustration, but were introduced by confining myself to note the minutest variations of the copies, which soon convinced me that the oldest were in general the most correct. Though no proof can be given that the poet superintended the publication of any one of these himself, yet we have little reason to suppose that he who wrote at the command of Elizabeth, and under the pa-

tronage of Southampton, was so very negligent of his fame, as to permit the most incompetent judges, such as the players were, to vary at their pleasure what he had set down for the first single editions; and we have better grounds for a suspicion that his works did materially suffer from their presumptuous corrections after his death.

It is very well known, that before the time of Shakspeare, the art of making title-pages was practised with as much, or perhaps more success than it has been since. Accordingly, to all his plays we find long and descriptive ones, which, when they were first published, were of great service to the venders of them. Pamphlets of every kind were hawked about the streets by a set of people resembling his own *Autolycus*, who proclaimed aloud the qualities of what they offered to sale, and might draw in many a purchaser by the mirth he was taught to expect from *the humours of Corporal Nym*, or *the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll*, who was not to be tempted by the representation of a fact merely historical. The players, however, laid aside the whole of this garniture, not finding it so necessary to procure success to a bulky volume, when the author's reputation was established, as it had been to bespeak attention to a few straggling pamphlets while it was yet uncertain.

The sixteen plays which are not in these volumes, remained unpublished till the folio in the year 1623, though the compiler of a work called *Theatrical Records*, mentions different single editions of them all before that time. But as no one of the editors could ever meet with such, nor has any one else pretended to have seen them, I think myself at liberty to suppose the compiler supplied the defects of the list out of his own imagination; since he must have had singular good fortune to have

been possessed of two or three different copies of all, when neither editors nor collectors, in the course of near fifty years, have been able so much as to obtain the sight of one of the number.⁹

At the end of the last volume I have added a tragedy of *King Leir*, published before that of Shakspeare, which it is not improbable he might have seen, as the father kneeling to the daughter, when she kneels to ask his blessing, is found in it; a circumstance two poets were not very likely to have hit on separately; and which seems borrowed by the latter with his usual judgment, it being the most natural passage in the whole play; and is introduced in such a manner, as to make it fairly his own. The ingenious editor of *The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* having never met with this play, and as it is not preserved in Mr. Garrick's collection, I thought it a curiosity worthy the notice of the publick.

I have likewise reprinted Shakspeare's *Sonnets*, from a copy published in 1609, by G. Eld, one of the printers of his plays; which, added to the consideration that they made their appearance with his name, and in his life-time, seems to be no slender proof of their authenticity. The same evidence might operate in favour of several more

⁹ It will be obvious to every one acquainted with the ancient English language, that in almost all the titles of plays in this catalogue of Mr. *William Rufus Chetwood*, the spelling is constantly overcharged with such a superfluity of letters as is not to be found in the writings of Shakspeare or his contemporaries. A more bungling attempt at a forgery was never obtruded on the publick. See the *British Theatre*, 1750; reprinted by Doddsley in 1756, under the title of "Theatrical Records, or an Account of English Dramatick Authors, and their Works," where all that is said concerning an Advertisement at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1597, is equally false, no copy of that play having been ever published by *Andrew Wise*.

plays which are omitted here, out of respect to the judgment of those who had omitted them before.²

It is to be wished that some method of publication most favourable to the character of an author were once established; whether we are to send into the world all his works without distinction, or arbitrarily to leave out what may be thought a disgrace to him. The first editors, who rejected *Pericles*, retained *Titus Andronicus*; and Mr. Pope, without any reason, named *The Winter's Tale*, a play that bears the strongest marks of the hand of Shakspeare, among those which he supposed to be spurious. Dr. Warburton has fixed a stigma on the three parts of *Henry the Sixth*, and some others:

“Inde Dolabella, est, atque hinc Antonius;”

and all have been willing to plunder Shakspeare, or mix up *a breed of barren metal* with his purest ore.

Joshua Barnes, the editor of Euripides, thought every scrap of his author so sacred, that he has preserved with the name of one of his plays, the only remaining word of it. The same reason indeed might be given in his favour, which caused the preservation of that valuable trifyllable; which is, that it cannot be found in any other place in the Greek language. But this does not seem to have been his only motive, as we find he has to the full as carefully published several detached and broken sentences, the gleanings from scholiasts, which have no claim to merit of that kind; and yet the author's works might be reckoned by some to be

² *Lochrine*, 1595. *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1600. *London Prodigal*, 1605. *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, 1609. *Puritan*, 1600. *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, 1613. *Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608.

incomplete without them. If then this duty is expected from every editor of a Greek or Roman poet, why is not the same insisted on in respect of an English classick? But if the custom of preserving all, whether worthy of it or not, be *more honoured in the breach than the observance*, the suppression at least should not be considered as a fault. The publication of such things as Swift had written merely to raise a laugh among his friends, has added something to the bulk of his works, but very little to his character as a writer. The four volumes³ that came out since Dr. Hawkesworth's edition, not to look on them as a tax levied on the publick (which I think one might without injustice,) contain not more than sufficient to have made one of real value; and there is a kind of disingenuity, not to give it a harsher title, in exhibiting what the author never meant should see the light; for no motive, but a sordid one, can betray the survivors to make that publick, which they themselves must be of opinion will be unfavourable to the memory of the dead.

Life does not often receive good unmixed with evil. The benefits of the art of printing are depraved by the facility with which scandal may be diffused, and secrets revealed; and by the temptation by which traffick solicits avarice to betray the weaknesses of passion, or the confidence of friendship.

I cannot forbear to think these posthumous publications injurious to society. A man conscious of literary reputation will grow in time afraid to write with tenderness to his sister, or with fondness to his child; or to remit on the slightest occasion,

³ Volumes XIII. XIV. XV. and XVI. in large 8vo. Nine more have since been added. REED.

or most pressing exigence, the rigour of critical choice, and grammatical severity. That esteem which preserves his letters, will at last produce his disgrace; when that which he wrote to his friend or his daughter shall be laid open to the publick.

There is perhaps sufficient evidence, that most of the plays in question, unequal as they may be to the rest, were written by Shakspeare; but the reason generally given for publishing the less correct pieces of an author, that it affords a more impartial view of a man's talents or way of thinking, than when we only see him in form, and prepared for our reception, is not enough to condemn an editor who thinks and practices otherwise. For what is all this to show, but that every man is more dull at one time than another? a fact which the world would easily have admitted, without asking any proofs in its support that might be destructive to an author's reputation.

To conclude; if the work, which this publication was meant to facilitate, has been already performed, the satisfaction of knowing it to be so may be obtained from hence; if otherwise, let those who raised expectations of correctness, and through negligence defeated them, be justly exposed by future editors, who will now be in possession of by far the greatest part of what they might have enquired after for years to no purpose; for in respect of such a number of the old quartos as are here exhibited, the first folio is a common book. This advantage will at least arise, that future editors, having equally recourse to the same copies, can challenge distinction and preference only by genius, capacity, industry, and learning.

As I have only collected materials for future artists, I consider what I have been doing as no more than an apparatus for their use. If the

publick is inclined to receive it as such, I am amply rewarded for my trouble; if otherwise, I shall submit with cheerfulness to the censure which should equitably fall on an injudicious attempt; having this consolation, however, that my design amounted to no more than a wish to encourage others to think of preserving the oldest editions of the English writers, which are growing scarcer every day; and to afford the world all the assistance or pleasure it can receive from the most authentick copies extant of its NOBLEST POET.⁴

G. S.

MR. CAPELL'S
INTRODUCTION.

IT is said of the ostrich, that she drops her egg at random, to be dispos'd of as chance pleases; either brought to maturity by the sun's kindly warmth, or else crush'd by beasts and the feet of passers-by: such, at least, is the account which naturalists have given us of this extraordinary bird; and admitting it for a truth, she is in this a fit emblem of almost every great genius: they conceive and produce with ease those noble issues of human understanding; but incubation, the

⁴ As the foregoing Advertisement appeared when its author was young and uninformed, he cannot now abide by many sentiments expressed in it: nor would it have been here reprinted, but in compliance with Dr. Johnson's injunction, that all the relative Prefaces should continue to attend his edition of our author's plays.

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dull work of putting them correctly upon paper and afterwards publishing, is a task they can not away with. If the original state of all such authors' writings, even from HOMER downward, could be enquir'd into and known, they would yield proof in abundance of the justness of what is here asserted: but the author now before us shall suffice for them all; being at once the greatest instance of genius in producing noble things, and of negligence in providing for them afterwards. This negligence indeed was so great, and the condition in which his works are come down to us so very deform'd, that it has, of late years, induc'd several gentlemen to make a revision of them: but the publick seems not to be satisfy'd with any of their endeavours; and the reason of it's discontent will be manifest, when the state of his old editions, and the methods that they have taken to amend them, are fully lay'd open, which is the first business of this Introduction.

Of thirty-six plays which Shakspeare has left us, and which compose the collection that was afterwards set out in folio, thirteen only were publish'd in his life-time, that have much resemblance to those in the folio; these thirteen are—" *Hamlet, First and second Henry IV. King Lear, Love's Labour's Lost, Merchant of Venice, Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, Richard II. and III. Romeo and Juliet, Titus Andronicus, and Troilus and Cressida.*" Some others, that came out in the same period, bear indeed the titles of—" *Henry V. King John, Merry Wives of Windsor, and Taming of the Shrew;*"⁴ but are no other than either first

⁴ This is meant of the first quarto edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*; for the second was printed from the folio. But the play in this first edition appears certainly to have been a spurious one, from Mr. POPE's account of it, who seems to have been the only

draughts, or mutilated and perhaps surreptitious impressions of those plays, but whether of the two is not easy to determine: *King John* is certainly a first draught, and in two parts; and so much another play, that only one line of it is retain'd in the second: there is also a first draught of the *Second and Third Parts of Henry VI.* published in his life-time under the following title,—“*The whole Contention betweene the two famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke:*” and to these plays, six in number, may be added—the first impression of *Romeo and Juliet*, being a play of the same stamp: The date of all these quarto's, and that of their several re-impressions, may be seen in a table that follows the Introduction. *Othello* came out only one year before the folio; and is, in the main, the same play that we have there: and this too is the case of the first-mention'd thirteen; notwithstanding there are in many of them great variations, and particularly, in *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Richard III.* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

As for the plays, which, we say, are either the poet's first draughts, or else imperfect and stolen copies, it will be thought, perhaps, they might as well have been left out of the account: but they are not wholly useless: some *lacunæ*, that are in all the other editions, have been judiciously fill'd up in modern impressions by the authority of these

editor whom it was ever seen by: great pains has been taken to trace who he had it of, (for it was not in his collection) but without success.

[Mr. Capell afterwards procured a sight of this desideratum, a circumstance which he has quaintly recorded in a note annexed to the MS. catalogue of his *Shaksperiana*: “—lent by Mr. Malone, an Irish gentleman, living in Queen Ann Street East.”]

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copies; and in some particular passages of them, where there happens to be a greater conformity than usual between them and the more perfect editions, there is here and there a various reading that does honour to the poet's judgment, and should upon that account be presum'd the true one; in other respects, they have neither use nor merit, but are merely curiosities.

Proceed we then to a description of the other fourteen. They all abound in faults, though not in equal degree; and those faults are so numerous, and of so many different natures, that nothing but a perusal of the pieces themselves can give an adequate conception of them; but amongst them are these that follow. Division of acts and scenes, they have none; *Othello* only excepted, which is divided into acts: entries of persons are extremely imperfect in them, (sometimes more, sometimes fewer than the scene requires) and their Exits are very often omitted; or, when mark'd, not always in the right place; and few scenical directions are to be met with throughout the whole: speeches are frequently confounded, and given to wrong persons, either whole, or in part; and sometimes, instead of the person speaking, you have the actor who presented him: and in two of the plays, (*Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Troilus and Cressida*) the same matter, and in nearly the same words, is set down twice in some passages; which who sees not to be only a negligence of the poet, and that but one of them ought to have been printed? But the reigning fault of all is in the measure: prose is very often printed as verse, and verse as prose; or, where rightly printed verse, that verse is not always right divided: and in all these pieces, the songs are in every particular still more corrupt than the other parts of them. These are the general and

principal defects: to which if you add—transposition of words, sentences, lines, and even speeches; words omitted, and others added without reason; and a punctuation so deficient, and so often wrong, that it hardly deserves regard; you have, upon the whole, a true but melancholy picture of the condition of these first printed plays: which bad as it is, is yet better than that of those which came after; or than that of the subsequent folio impression of some of these which we are now speaking of.

This folio impression was sent into the world seven years after the author's death, by two of his fellow-players; and contains, besides the last-mention'd fourteen, the true and genuine copies of the other six plays, and sixteen that were never publish'd before:⁵ the editors make great professions of fidelity, and some complaint of injury done to them and the author by stolen and maim'd copies; giving withal an advantageous, if just, idea of the copies which they have follow'd: but see the terms they make use of. "It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; but since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his friends, the

⁵ There is yet extant in the books of the Stationers' Company, an entry bearing date—Feb. 12, 1624, to Messrs. Jaggard and Blount, the proprietors of this first folio, which is thus worded: "*Mr. Wm. Shakespear's Comedy's History's & Tragedy's so many of the said Copy's as bee not enter'd to other men:*" and this entry is follow'd by the titles of all those sixteen plays that were first printed in the folio: The other twenty plays (*Othello*, and *King John*, excepted; which the person who furnished this transcript, thinks he may have overlook'd,) are enter'd too in these books, under their respective years; but to whom the transcript says not.

office of their care, and pain, to have collected & publish'd them; and so to have publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that expos'd them: even those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happie imitator of nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His minde and hand went together: and what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." Who now does not feel himself inclin'd to expect an accurate and good performance in the edition of these prefacers? But alas, it is nothing less: for (if we except the six spurious ones, whose places were then supply'd by true and genuine copies) the editions of plays preceding the folio, are the very basis of those we have there; which are either printed from those editions, or from the copies which they made use of: and this is principally evident in—" *First and Second Henry IV. Love's Labour's Lost, Merchant of Venice, Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, Richard II. Titus Andronicus, and Troilus and Cressida*;" for in the others we see somewhat a greater latitude, as was observ'd a little above: but in these plays, there is an almost strict conformity between the two impressions: some additions are in the second, and some omissions; but the faults and errors of the quarto's are all preserv'd in the folio, and others added to them; and what difference there is, is generally for the worse on the side of the folio editors: which should give us but faint hopes of meeting with greater accuracy in the plays which they first publish'd; and,

accordingly, we find them subject to all the imperfections that have been noted in the former: nor is their edition in general distinguish'd by any mark of preference above the earliest quarto's, but that some of their plays are divided into acts, and some others into acts and scenes; and that with due precision, and agreeable to the author's idea of the nature of such divisions. The order of printing these plays, the way in which they are class'd, and the titles given them, being matters of some curiosity, the Table that is before the first folio is here reprinted: and to it are added marks, put between crotchets, shewing the plays that are divided; *a* signifying—acts, *a & s*—acts and scenes.

*TABLE of Plays in the folio.*⁶

COMEDIES.	<i>Measure for Measure.</i> [<i>a & s.</i>]
<i>The Tempest.</i> [<i>a & s.</i>]	<i>The Comedy of Errours.*</i>
<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*</i> [<i>a & s.</i>]	[<i>a.</i>]
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor.</i> [<i>a & s.</i>]	<i>Much adoo about Nothing.</i>
	[<i>a.</i>]
	<i>Loves Labour lost.*</i>

⁶ The plays, mark'd with asterisks, are spoken of by name, in a book, call'd—*Wit's Treasury, being the second Part of Wit's Commonwealth*, written by Francis Meres; at p. 282: who, in the same paragraph, mentions another play as being Shakspeare's, under the title of *Loves Labours Wonne*; a title that seems well adapted to *All's well that ends well*, and under which it might be first acted. In the paragraph immediately preceding, he speaks of his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, and his *Sonnets*: this book was printed in 1598, by P. Short, for Cuthbert Burbie; octavo, small. The same author, at p. 283, mentions too a *Richard the Third*, written by doctor Leg, author of another play, call'd *The Destruction of Jerusalem*. And there is in the Musæum, a manuscript Latin play upon the same subject, written by one Henry Lacy in 1586: which

<i>Midsummer Nights Dreame.*</i> [a.]	<i>The Life of King Henry the Fifth.</i>
<i>The Merchant of Venice.*</i> [a.]	<i>The First part of King Henry the Sixth.</i>
<i>As you like it.</i> [a & f.]	<i>The Second part of King Henry the Sixth.</i>
<i>The Taming of the Shrew.</i>	<i>The Third part of King Henry the Sixth.</i>
<i>All is well, that Ends well.</i> [a.]	<i>The Life & Death of Richard the Third.*</i> [a & f.]
<i>Twelve-Night, or what you will.</i> [a & f.]	<i>The Life of King Henry the Eighth.</i> [a & f.]
<i>The Winters Tale.</i> [a & f.]	

HISTORIES.

*The Life and Death of
King John.** [a & f.]
*The Life & Death of
Richard the second.** [a
& f.]
*The First part of King
Henry the fourth.* [a
& f.]
*The Second Part of K.
Henry the fourth.** [a
& f.]

TRAGEDIES.

[*Troilus and Cressida*]
 from the second folio;
 omitted in the first.
The Tragedy of Coriolanus.
 [a.]
*Titus Andronicus.** [a.]
*Romeo and Juliet.**
Timon of Athens.
*The Life and death of Ju-
lius Cæsar.* [a.]

Latin play is but a weak performance; and yet seemeth to be the play spoken of by Sir John Harrington, (for the author was a Cambridge man, and of St. John's,) in this passage of his *Apologie of Poetrie*, prefix'd to his translation of Ariosto's *Orlando*, edit. 1591, fol. "— and for tragedies, to omit other famous tragedies; that, that was played at S. Johns in Cambridge, of *Richard the 3.* would move (I thinke) Phalaris the tyraunt, and terrifie all tyrānous minded men, frō following their foolish ambitious humors, seeing how his ambition made him kill his brother, his nephews, his wife, beside infinit others; and last of all after a short and troublesome raigne, to end his miserable life, and to have his body harried after his death."

<i>The Tragedy of Macbeth.</i>	<i>Othello, the Moore of Venice.</i>
[a & f.]	[a & f.]
<i>The Tragedy of Hamlet.</i>	<i>Antony and Cleopater.</i>
<i>King Lear.</i> [a & f.]	<i>Cymbeline King of Britaine.</i>
	[a & f.]

Having premis'd thus much about the state and condition of these first copies, it may not be improper, nor will it be absolutely a digression, to add something concerning their authenticity: in doing which, it will be greatly for the reader's ease,—and our own, to confine ourselves to the quarto's: which, it is hop'd, he will allow of; especially, as our intended vindication of them will also include in it (to the eye of a good observer) that of the plays that appear'd first in the folio: which therefore omitting, we now turn ourselves to the quarto's.

We have seen the slur that is endeavour'd to be thrown upon them indiscriminately by the player editors, and we see it too wip'd off by their having themselves follow'd the copies that they condemn. A modern editor, who is not without his followers, is pleas'd to assert confidently in his preface, that they are printed from "piece-meal parts, and copies of prompters:" but his arguments for it are some of them without foundation, and the others not conclusive; and it is to be doubted, that the opinion is only thrown out to countenance an abuse that has been carry'd to much too great lengths by himself and another editor,—that of putting out of the text passages that they did not like. These censures then and this opinion being set aside, is it criminal to try another conjecture, and see what can be made of it? It is known, that Shakspeare liv'd to no great age, being taken

off in his fifty-third year; and yet his works are so numerous, that, when we take a survey of them, they seem the productions of a life of twice that length: for to the thirty-six plays in this collection, we must add seven, (one of which is in two parts,) perhaps written over again;⁷ seven others that were publish'd some of them in his life-time, and all with his name; and another seven, that are upon good grounds imputed to him; making in all, fifty-eight plays; besides the part that he may reasonably be thought to have had in other men's labours, being himself a player and a manager of theatres: what his prose productions were, we know not: but it can hardly be suppos'd, that he, who had so considerable a share in the confidence of the earls of Essex and Southampton, could be a mute spectator only of controversies in which they were so much interested; and his other poetical works, that are known, will fill a volume the size of these that we have here. When the number and bulk of these pieces, the shortness of his life, and the other busy employments of it are reflected upon duly, can it be a wonder that he should be so loose a transcriber of them? or why should we refuse to give credit to what his companions tell us, of the state of those transcriptions, and of the facility with which they were pen'd? Let it then be granted, that these quarto's are the poet's own copies, however they were come by; hastily written at first, and issuing from presses most of them as corrupt and licentious as can any where be produc'd, and not overseen by himself, nor by any of his friends: and there can be no stronger reason for subscribing to any opinion, than may

⁷ Vide, this Introduction, p. 256.

be drawn in favour of this from the condition of all the other plays that were first printed in the folio: for, in method of publication, they have the greatest likeness possible to those which preceded them, and carry all the same marks of haste and negligence; yet the genuineness of the latter is attested by those who publish'd them, and no proof brought to invalidate their testimony. If it be still ask'd, what then becomes of the accusation brought against the quarto's by the player editors, the answer is not so far off as may perhaps be expected: it may be true that they were "stoln;" but stoln from the author's copies, by transcribers who found means to get at them:⁸ and "maim'd" they must needs be, in respect of their many alterations after the first performance: and who knows, if the difference that is between them, in some of the plays that are common to them both, has not been studiously heighten'd by the player editors,—who had the means in their power, being masters of all the alterations,—to give at once a greater currency to their own lame edition, and support the charge which they bring against the quarto's? this, at least, is a probable opinion, and no bad way of accounting for those differences.⁹

⁸ But see a note at p. 259, which seems to infer that they were fairly come by: which is, in truth, the editor's opinion, at least of some of them; though, in way of argument, and for the sake of clearness, he has here admitted the charge in that full extent in which they bring it.

⁹ Some of these alterations are in the quarto's themselves; (another proof this, of their being authentick,) as in *Richard II.*: where a large scene, that of the king's deposing, appears first in the copy of 1608, the third quarto impression, being wanting in the two former: and in one copy of 2 *Henry IV.* there is a scene too that is not in the other, though of the same year; it is the first of act the third. And *Hamlet* has some still more considerable; for

It were easy to add abundance of other arguments in favour of these quarto's;—Such as, their exact affinity to almost all the publications of this sort that came out about that time; of which it will hardly be asserted by any reasoning man, that they are all clandestine copies, and publish'd without their authors' consent: next, the high improbability of supposing that none of these plays were of the poet's own setting-out: whose case is render'd singular by such a supposition; it being certain, that every other author of the time, without exception, who wrote any thing largely, publish'd some of his plays himself, and Ben Jonson all of them: nay, the very errors and faults of these quarto's,—of some of them at least, and those such as are brought against them by other arguers,—are, with the editor, proofs of their genuineness; for from what hand, but that of the author himself, could come those seemingly-strange repetitions which are spoken of at p. 258? those imperfect entries, and entries of persons who have no concern in the play at all, neither in the scene where they are made to enter, nor in any other part of it? yet such there are in several of these quarto's; and such might well be expected in the hasty draughts of so negligent an author, who neither saw at once all he might want, nor, in some instances, gave himself sufficient time to consider the fitness

the copy of 1605 has these words:—"Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie:" now though no prior copy has yet been produc'd, it is certain there was such by the testimony of this title-page: and that the play was in being at least nine years before, is prov'd by a book of doctor Lodge's printed in 1596; which play was perhaps an imperfect one; and not unlike that we have now of *Romeo and Juliet*, printed the year after; a fourth instance too of what the note advances.

of what he was then penning. These and other like arguments might, as is said before, be collected, and urg'd for the plays that were first publish'd in the quarto's; that is, for fourteen of them, for the other six are out of the question: but what has been enlarg'd upon above, of their being follow'd by the folio, and their apparent general likeness to all the other plays that are in that collection, is so very forcible as to be sufficient of itself to satisfy the unprejudic'd, that the plays of both impressions spring all from the same stock, and owe their numerous imperfections to one common origin and cause,—the too-great negligence and haste of their over-careless producer.

But to return to the thing immediately treated,—the state of the old editions. The quarto's went through many impressions, as may be seen in the Table: and, in each play, the last is generally taken from the impression next before it, and so onward to the first; the few that come not within this rule, are taken notice of in the Table: and this further is to be observ'd of them: that, generally speaking, the more distant they are from the original, the more they abound in faults; 'till, in the end, the corruptions of the last copies become so excessive, as to make them of hardly any worth. The folio too had it's re-impressions, the dates and notices of which are likewise in the Table, and they tread the same round as did the quarto's: only that the third of them has seven plays more, (see their titles below,²) in which it is follow'd by

² *Lochrine; The London Prodigal; Pericles, Prince of Tyre; The Puritan, or, the Widow of Watling Street; Sir John Oldcastle; Thomas Lord Cromwell; and The Yorkshire Tragedy:* And the imputed ones, mention'd a little above, are these;—*The Arraignment of Paris; Birth of Merlin; Fair Em; Edward III. Merry Devil of Edmonton;*

the last; and that again by the first of the modern impressions, which come now to be spoken of.

If the stage be a mirror of the times, as undoubtedly it is, and we judge of the age's temper by what we see prevailing there, what must we think of the times that succeeded Shakspeare? Jonson, favour'd by a court that delighted only in masques, had been gaining ground upon him even in his life-time; and his death put him in full possession of a post he had long aspir'd to, the empire of the drama: the props of this new king's throne, were—Fletcher, Shirley, Middleton, Massinger, Broome, and others; and how unequal they all were, the monarch and his subjects too, to the poet they came after, let their works testify: yet they had the vogue on their side, during all those blessed times that preceded the civil war, and Shakspeare was held in disesteem. The war, and medley government that follow'd, swept all these things away: but they were restor'd with the king; and another stage took place, in which Shakspeare had little share. Dryden had then the lead, and

Mucedorus; and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*: but in *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, Rowley is call'd his partner in the title-page; and Fletcher, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. What external proofs there are of their coming from Shakspeare, are gather'd all together, and put down in the Table; and further it not concerns us to engage: but let those who are inclin'd to dispute it, carry this along with them;—that London, in Shakspeare's time, had a multitude of playhouses; erected some in inn-yards, and such like places, and frequented by the lowest of the people; such audiences might have been seen some years ago in Southwark and Bartholomew, and may be seen at this day in the country; to which it was also a custom for players to make excursion, at wake times and festivals: and for such places, and such occasions, might these pieces be compos'd in the author's early time; the worst of them suiting well enough to the parties they might be made for:—and this, or something nearly of this sort, may have been the case too of some plays in his great collection, which shall be spoken of in their place.

maintain'd it for half a century: though his government was sometimes disputed by Lee, Tate, Shadwell, Wytcherley, and others; weaken'd much by *The Rehearsal*; and quite overthrown in the end by Otway, and Rowe: what the cast of their plays was, is known to every one: but that Shakspeare, the true and genuine Shakspeare, was not much relish'd, is plain from the many alterations of him, that were brought upon the stage by some of those gentlemen, and by others within that period.

But, from what has been said, we are not to conclude—that the poet had no admirers: for the contrary is true; and he had in all this interval no inconsiderable party amongst men of the greatest understanding, who both saw his merit, in despite of the darkness it was then wrapt up in, and spoke loudly in his praise; but the stream of the publick favour ran the other way. But this too coming about at the time we are speaking of, there was a demand for his works, and in a form that was more convenient than the folio's: in consequence of which, the gentleman last mentioned was set to work by the booksellers; and, in 1709, he put out an edition in six volumes, octavo, which, unhappily, is the basis of all the other moderns: for this editor went no further than to the edition nearest to him in time, which was the folio of 1685, the last and worst of those impressions: this he republish'd with great exactness; correcting here and there some of it's grossest mistakes, and dividing into acts and scenes the plays that were not divided before.

But no sooner was this edition in the hands of the publick, than they saw in part its deficiencies, and one of another sort began to be required of them; which accordingly was set about some years

after by two gentlemen at once, Mr. Pope and Mr. Theobald. The labours of the first came out in 1725, in six volumes quarto: and he has the merit of having first improv'd his author, by the insertion of many large passages, speeches, and single lines, taken from the quarto's; and of amending him in other places, by readings fetch'd from the same: but his materials were few, and his collation of them not the most careful; which, join'd to other faults, and to that main one—of making his predecessor's the copy himself follow'd, brought his labours in disrepute, and has finally sunk them in neglect.

His publication retarded the other gentleman, and he did not appear 'till the year 1733, when his work too came out in seven volumes, octavo. The opposition that was between them seems to have inflam'd him, which was heighten'd by other motives, and he declaims vehemently against the work of his antagonist: which yet serv'd him for a model; and his own is made only a little better, by his having a few more materials; of which he was not a better collator than the other, nor did he excel him in use of them; for, in this article, both their judgments may be equally call'd in question; in what he has done that is conjectural, he is rather more happy; but in this he had large assistances.

But the gentleman that came next, is a critick of another stamp; and pursues a track, in which it is greatly to be hop'd he will never be follow'd in the publication of any authors whatsoever: for this were, in effect, to annihilate them, if carry'd a little further; by destroying all marks of peculiarity and notes of time, all easiness of expression and numbers, all justness of thought, and the nobility of not a few of their conceptions:

The manner in which his author is treated, excites an indignation that will be thought by some to vent itself too strongly; but terms weaker would do injustice to my feelings, and the censure shall be hazarded. Mr. Pope's edition was the groundwork of this over-bold one; splendidly printed at Oxford in six quarto volumes, and publish'd in the year 1744: the publisher disdains all collation of folio, or quarto; and fetches all from his great self, and the moderns his predecessors: wantoning in very licence of conjecture; and sweeping all before him, (without notice, or reason given) that not suits his taste, or lies level to his conceptions. But this justice should be done him:—as his conjectures are numerous, they are oftentimes not unhappy; and some of them are of that excellence, that one is struck with amazement to see a person of so much judgment as he shows himself in them, adopt a method of publishing that runs counter to all the ideas that wise men have hitherto entertain'd of an editor's province and duty.

The year 1747 produc'd a fifth edition, in eight octavo volumes, publish'd by Mr. Warburton; which though it is said in the title-page to be the joint work of himself and the second editor, the third ought rather to have been mention'd, for it is printed from his text. The merits of this performance have been so thoroughly discuss'd in two very ingenious books, *The Canons of Criticism*, and *Revisal of Shakspeare's Text*, that it is needless to say any more of it: this only shall be added to what may be there met with,—that the edition is not much benefited by fresh acquisitions from the old ones, which this gentleman seems to have neglected.³

³ It will perhaps be thought strange, that nothing should be said in this place of another edition that came out about a twelvemonth

Other charges there are, that might be brought against these modern impressions, without infringing the laws of truth or candour either: but what is said, will be sufficient; and may satisfy their greatest favourers,—that the superstructure cannot be a sound one, which is built upon so bad a foundation as that work of Mr. Rowe's; which all of them, as we see, in succession, have yet made their corner-stone: The truth is, it was impossible that such a beginning should end better than it has done: the fault was in the setting-out; and all the diligence that could be us'd, join'd to the discernment of a Pearce, or a Bentley, could never purge their author of all his defects by their method of proceeding.

The editor now before you was appriz'd in time of this truth; saw the wretched condition his author was reduc'd to by these late tamperings, and thought seriously of a cure for it, and that so long ago as the year 1745; for the attempt was first suggested by that gentleman's performance, which came out at Oxford the year before: which when he had perus'd with no little astonishment, and consider'd the fatal consequences that must inevitably follow the imitation of so much licence, he resolv'd himself to be the champion; and to exert to the uttermost such abilities as he was master of,

ago, in eight volumes, octavo; but the reasons for it, are these:—There is no use made of it, nor could be; for the present was finish'd, within a play or two, and printed too in great part, before that appear'd: the first sheet of this work (being the first of Vol. II.) went to the press in September 1760: and this volume was follow'd by Volumes VIII. IV. IX. I. VI. and VII.; the last of which was printed off in August 1765: In the next place, the merits and demerits of it are unknown to the present editor even at this hour: this only he has perceiv'd in it, having look'd it but slightly over, that the text it follows is that of its nearest predecessor, and from that copy it was printed.

to save from further ruin an edifice of this dignity, which England must for ever glory in. Hereupon he possess'd himself of the other modern editions, the folio's, and as many quarto's as could presently be procur'd; and, within a few years after, fortune and industry help'd him to all the rest, six only excepted; ⁴ adding to them withal twelve more, which the compilers of former tables had no knowledge of. Thus furnish'd, he fell immediately to collation,—which is the first step in works of this nature; and, without it, nothing is done to purpose,—first of moderns with moderns, then of moderns with ancients, and afterwards of ancients with others more ancient: 'till, at the last, a ray of light broke forth upon him, by which he hop'd to find his way through the wilderness of these editions into that fair country the poet's real habitation. He had not proceeded far in his collation, before he saw cause to come to this resolution;—to stick invariably to the old editions, (that is, the best of them) which hold now the place of manuscripts, no scrap of the author's writing having the luck to come down to us; and never to depart from them, but in cases where reason, and the uniform practice of men of the greatest note in this art, tell him—they may be quitted; nor yet in those, without notice. But it will be necessary, that the general method of this edition should now

⁴ But of one of these six, (a 1. *Henry IV.* edition 1604) the editor thinks he is possessed of a very large fragment, imperfect only in the first and last sheet; which has been collated, as far as it goes, along with others: And of the twelve quarto editions, which he has had the fortune to add to those that were known before, some of them are of great value; as may be seen by looking into the Table.

[As this table relates chiefly to Mr. Capell's desiderata, &c. (and had been anticipated by another table equally comprehensive, which the reader will find in the present volume,) it is here omitted.]

be lay'd open; that the publick may be put in a capacity not only of comparing it with those they already have, but of judging whether any thing remains to be done towards the fixing this author's text in the manner himself gave it.

It is said a little before,—that we have nothing of his in writing; that the printed copies are all that is left to guide us; and that those copies are subject to numberless imperfections, but not all in like degree: our first business then, was—to examine their merit, and see on which side the scale of goodness preponderated; which we have generally found, to be on that of the most ancient: it may be seen in the Table, what editions are judg'd to have the preference among those plays that were printed singly in quarto; and for those plays, the text of those editions is chiefly adher'd to: in all the rest, the first folio is follow'd; the text of which is by far the most faultless of the editions in that form; and has also the advantage in three quarto plays, in *2 Henry IV.* *Othello*, and *Richard III.* Had the editions thus follow'd been printed with carefulness, from correct copies, and copies not added to or otherwise alter'd after those impressions, there had been no occasion for going any further: but this was not at all the case, even in the best of them; and it therefore became proper and necessary to look into the other old editions, and to select from thence whatever improves the author, or contributes to his advancement in perfectness, the point in view throughout all this performance: that they do improve him, was with the editor an argument in their favour; and a presumption of genuineness for what is thus selected, whether additions, or differences of any other nature; and the causes of their appearing in some copies, and being wanting in others, cannot now be discover'd, by reason of the time's distance,

and defect of fit materials for making the discovery. Did the limits of his Introduction allow of it, the editor would gladly have dilated and treated more at large this article of his plan; as that which is of greatest importance, and most likely to be contested of any thing in it: but this doubt, or this dissent, (if any be) must come from those persons only who are not yet possess'd of the idea they ought to entertain of these ancient impressions; for of those who are, he fully persuades himself he shall have both the approof and the applause. But without entering further in this place into the reasonableness, or even necessity, of so doing, he does for the present acknowledge—that he has every-where made use of such materials as he met with in other old copies, which he thought improv'd the editions that are made the ground-work of the present text: and whether they do so, or no, the judicious part of the world may certainly know, by turning to a collection that will be publish'd; where all discarded readings are enter'd, all additions noted, and variations of every kind; and the editions specify'd, to which they severally belong.

But, when these helps were administer'd, there was yet behind a very great number of passages, labouring under various defects and those of various degree, that had their cure to seek from some other sources, that of copies affording it no more: For these he had recourse in the first place to the assistance of modern copies: and, where that was incompetent, or else absolutely deficient, which was very often the case, there he sought the remedy in himself, using judgment and conjecture; which, he is bold to say, he will not be found to have exercis'd wantonly, but to follow the establish'd

rules of critique with soberness and temperance. These emendations, (whether of his own, or other gentlemen^s) carrying in themselves a face of certainty, and coming in aid of places that were apparently corrupt, are admitted into the text, and the rejected reading is always put below; some others,—that have neither that certainty, nor are of that necessity, but are specious and plausible, and may be thought by some to mend the passage they belong to,—will have a place in the collection that is spoken of above. But where it is said, that the rejected reading is always put below, this must be taken with some restriction: for some of the emendations, and of course the ancient readings upon which they are grounded, being of a complicated nature, the general method was there inconvenient; and, for these few, you are refer'd to a note which will be found among the rest: and another sort there are, that are simply insertions; these are effectually pointed out by being printed in the gothick or black character.

Hitherto, the defects and errors of these old editions have been of such a nature, that we could

^s In the manuscripts from which all these plays are printed, the emendations are given to their proper owners by initials and other marks that are in the margin of those manuscripts; but they are suppressed in the print for two reasons: First, their number, in some pages, makes them a little unsightly; and the editor professes himself weak enough to like a well-printed book: In the next place, he does declare—that his only object has been, to do service to his great author; which provided it be done, he thinks it of small importance by what hand the service was administer'd: If the partizans of former editors shall chance to think them injur'd by this suppression, he must upon this occasion violate the rules of modesty, by declaring—that he himself is the most injur'd by it; whose emendations are equal, at least in number, to all theirs if put together; to say nothing of his recover'd readings, which are more considerable still.

lay them before the reader, and submit to his judgment the remedies that are apply'd to them; which is accordingly done, either in the page itself where they occur, or in some note that is to follow: but there are some behind that would not be so manag'd; either by reason of their frequency, or difficulty of subjecting them to the rules under which the others are brought: they have been spoken of before at p. 258, where the corruptions are all enumerated, and are as follows;—a want of proper exits and entrances, and of many scenical directions, throughout the work in general, and, in some of the plays, a want of division; and the errors are those of measure, and punctuation: all these are mended, and supply'd, without notice and silently; but the reasons for so doing, and the method observ'd in doing it, shall be a little enlarg'd upon, that the fidelity of the editor, and that which is chiefly to distinguish him from those who have gone before, may stand sacred and unimpeachable; and, first, of the division.

The thing chiefly intended in reprinting the list of titles that may be seen at p. 261, was,—to show which plays were divided into acts, which into acts and scenes, and which of them were not divided at all; and the number of the first class is—eight; of the third—eleven: for though in *Henry V.* *Henry VI.* *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*, there is some division aim'd at; yet it is so lame and erroneous, that it was thought best to consider them as totally undivided, and to rank them accordingly: now when these plays were to be divided, as well those of the first class as those of the third, the plays of the second class were studiously attended to; and a rule was pick'd out from them, by which to regulate this division:

which rule might easily have been discover'd before, had but any the least pains have been bestow'd upon it; and certainly it was very well worth it, since neither can the representation be manag'd, nor the order and thread of the fable be properly conceiv'd by the reader, 'till this article is adjusted. The plays that are come down to us divided, must be look'd upon as of the author's own settling; and in them, with regard to acts, we find him following establish'd precepts, or, rather, conforming himself to the practice of some other dramatick writers of his time; for they, it is likely, and nature, were the books he was best acquainted with: his scene divisions he certainly did not fetch from writers upon the drama; for, in them, he observes a method in which perhaps he is singular, and he is invariable in the use of it: with him, a change of scene implies generally a change of place, though not always; but always an entire evacuation of it, and a succession of new persons: that *liaison* of the scenes, which Jonson seems to have attempted, and upon which the French stage prides itself, he does not appear to have had any idea of; of the other unities he was perfectly well appriz'd; and has follow'd them, in one of his plays, with as great strictness and greater happiness than can perhaps be met with in any other writer: the play meant is *The Comedy of Errors*; in which the action is one, the place one, and the time such as even Aristotle himself would allow of—the revolution of half a day: but even in this play, the change of scene arises from change of persons, and by that it is regulated; as are also all the other plays that are not divided in the folio: for whoever will take the trouble to examine those that are divided, (and they are pointed out for him in the list) will see them conform exactly to the rule above-mention'd;

and can then have but little doubt, that it should be apply'd to all the rest.⁶ To have distinguish'd these divisions,—made (indeed) without the authority, but following the example of the folio,—had been useless and troublesome; and the editor fully persuades himself, that what he has said will be sufficient, and that he shall be excus'd by the ingenious and candid for overpassing them without further notice: whose pardon he hopes also to have for some other unnotic'd matters that are related to this in hand, such as—marking the place of action, both general and particular; supplying scenical directions; and due regulating of exits, and entrances: for the first, there is no tittle in the old editions; and in both the latter, they are so deficient and faulty throughout, that it would not be much amiss if we look'd upon them as wanting too; and then all these several articles might be consider'd as additions, that needed no other pointing out than a declaration that they are so: the light they throw upon the plays in general, and particularly upon some parts of them,—such as, the battle scenes throughout; *Cæsar's* passage to the senate-house, and subsequent assassination; Antony's death; the surprisal and death of Cleopatra; that of Titus Andronicus; and a multitude of others, which are all directed new in this edition,—will justify these insertions; and may, possibly, merit the reader's thanks, for the great aids which they afford to his conception.

⁶ The divisions that are in the folio are religiously adher'd to, except in two or three instances which will be spoken of in their place; so that, as is said before, a perusal of those old-divided plays will put every one in a capacity of judging whether the present editor has proceeded rightly or no: the current editions are divided in such a manner, that nothing like a rule can be collected from any of them.

It remains now to speak of errors of the old copies which are here amended without notice, to wit—the pointing, and wrong division of much of them respecting the numbers. And as to the first, it is so extremely erroneous, throughout all the plays, and in every old copy, that small regard is due to it; and it becomes an editor's duty, (instead of being influenc'd by such a punctuation, or even casting his eyes upon it,) to attend closely to the meaning of what is before him, and to new-point it accordingly: was it the business of this edition—to make parade of discoveries, this article alone would have afforded ample field for it; for a very great number of passages are now first set to rights by this only, which, before, had either no sense at all, or one unsuited to the context, and unworthy the noble penner of it: but all the emendations of this sort, though inferior in merit to no others whatsoever, are consign'd to silence; some few only excepted, of passages that have been much contested, and whose present adjustment might possibly be call'd in question again; these will be spoken of in some note, and a reason given for embracing them: all the other parts of the work have been examin'd with equal diligence, and equal attention; and the editor flatters himself, that the punctuation he has follow'd, (into which he has admitted some novelties,⁷) will be found of so much benefit to his author, that those who run may read, and that with profit and understanding. The other great mistake in these old editions, and which is very insufficiently

⁷ If the use of these new pointings, and also of certain marks that he will meet with in this edition, do not occur immediately to the reader, (as we think it will) he may find it explain'd to him at large in the preface to a little octavo volume intitl'd—“*Pro-lusions, or, select Pieces of ancient Poetry;*” publish'd in 1760 by this editor, and printed for Mr. Tonson.

rectify'd in any of the new ones, relates to the poet's numbers; his verse being often wrong divided, or printed wholly as prose, and his prose as often printed like verse: this, though not so universal as their wrong pointing, is yet so extensive an error in the old copies, and so impossible to be pointed out otherwise than by a note, that an editor's silent amendment of it is surely pardonable at least; for who would not be disgusted with that perpetual sameness which must necessarily have been in all the notes of this sort? Neither are they, in truth, emendations that require proving; every good ear does immediately adopt them, and every lover of the poet will be pleas'd with that accession of beauty which results to him from them: it is perhaps to be lamented, that there is yet standing in his works much unpleasing mixture of prosaic and metrical dialogue, and sometimes in places seemingly improper, as—in *Othello*, p. 431; and some others which men of judgment will be able to pick out for themselves: but these blemishes are not now to be wip'd away, at least not by an editor, whose province it far exceeds to make a change of this nature; but must remain as marks of the poet's negligence, and of the haste with which his pieces were compos'd: what he manifestly intended prose, (and we can judge of his intentions only from what appears in the editions that are come down to us,) should be printed as prose, what verse as verse; which, it is hop'd, is now done, with an accuracy that leaves no great room for any further considerable improvements in that way.

Thus have we run through, in as brief a manner as possible, all the several heads, of which it was thought proper and even necessary that the publick should be appriz'd; as well those that

concern preceding editions, both old and new; as the other which we have just quitted,—the method observ'd in the edition that is now before them: which though not so entertaining, it is confess'd, nor affording so much room to display the parts and talents of a writer, as some other topicks that have generally supply'd the place of them; such as,—criticisms or panegyricks upon the author, historical anecdotes, essays, and *florilegia*; yet there will be found some odd people, who may be apt to pronounce of them—that they are suitable to the place they stand in, and convey all the instruction that should be look'd for in a preface. Here, therefore, we might take our leave of the reader, bidding him welcome to the banquet that is set before him; were it not apprehended, and reasonably, that he will expect some account why it is not serv'd up to him at present with it's accusom'd and laudable garniture, of "*Notes, Glossaries,*" &c. Now though it might be reply'd, as a reason for what is done,—that a very great part of the world, amongst whom is the editor himself, profess much dislike to this paginary intermixture of text and comment; in works meerly of entertainment, and written in the language of the country; as also—that he, the editor, does not possess the secret of dealing out notes by measure, and distributing them amongst his volumes so nicely that the equality of their bulk shall not be broke in upon the thickness of a sheet of paper; yet, having other matter at hand which he thinks may excuse him better, he will not have recourse to these above-mention'd: which matter is no other, than his very strong desire of approving himself to the publick a man of integrity; and of making his future present more perfect, and as worthy of their acceptance as his abilities will let him. For the

explaining of what is said, which is a little wrap'd up in mystery at present, we must inform that publick—that another work is prepar'd, and in great forwardness, having been wrought upon many years; nearly indeed as long as the work which is now before them, for they have gone hand in hand almost from the first: this work, to which we have given for title *The School of Shakspeare*, consists wholly of extracts, (with observations upon some of them, interspers'd occasionally,) from books that may properly be call'd—his school; as they are indeed the sources from which he drew the greater part of his knowledge in mythology and classical matters,⁸ his fable, his history, and even

⁸ Though our expressions, as we think, are sufficiently guarded in this place, yet, being fearful of misconstruction, we desire to be heard further as to this affair of his learning. It is our firm belief then,—that Shakspeare was very well grounded, at least in *Latin*, at school: It appears from the clearest evidence possible, that his father was a man of no little substance, and very well able to give him such education; which, perhaps, he might be inclin'd to carry further, by sending him to a university; but was prevented in this design (if he had it) by his son's early marriage, which, from monuments and other like evidence, it appears with no less certainty, must have happen'd before he was seventeen, or very soon after: the displeasure of his father, which was the consequence of this marriage, or else some excesses which he is said to have been guilty of, it is probable, drove him up to town; where he engag'd early in some of the theatres, and was honour'd with the patronage of the Earl of Southampton: his *Venus and Adonis* is address'd to that earl in a very pretty and modest dedication, in which he calls it—"the first beire of his invention;" and ushers it to the world with this singular motto,—

"Vilia miretur vulgus, mihi flavus Apollo

"Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua;"

and the whole poem, as well as his *Lucrece*, which follow'd it soon after, together with his choice of those subjects, are plain marks of his acquaintance with some of the Latin classics, at least at that time: The dissipation of youth, and, when that was over, the busy scene in which he instantly plung'd himself, may very well be suppos'd to have hinder'd his making any great progress in them;

the seeming peculiarities of his language: to furnish out these materials, all the plays have been

but that such a mind as his should quite lose the tincture of any knowledge it had once been imbu'd with, can not be imagin'd: accordingly we see, that this school-learning (for it was no more) stuck with him to the last; and it was the recordations, as we may call it, of that learning which produc'd the Latin that is in many of his plays, and most plentifully in those that are most early: every several piece of it is aptly introduc'd, given to a proper character, and utter'd upon some proper occasion; and so well cemented, as it were, and join'd to the passage it stands in, as to deal conviction to the judicious—that the whole was wrought up together, and fetch'd from his own little store, upon the sudden and without study.

The other languages which he has sometimes made use of, that is—the *Italian* and *French*, are not of such difficult conquest that we should think them beyond his reach: an acquaintance with the first of them was a sort of fashion in his time; Surrey and the sonnet-writers set it on foot, and it was continu'd by Sidney and Spenser: all our poetry issu'd from that school; and it would be wonderful indeed, if he, whom we saw a little before putting himself with so much zeal under the banner of the muses, should not have been tempted to taste at least of that fountain to which of all his other brethren there was such continual resort: let us conclude then, that he did taste of it; but, happily for himself, and more happy for the world that enjoys him now, he did not find it to his relish, and threw away the cup: metaphor apart, it is evident—that he had some little knowledge of the *Italian*: perhaps, just as much as enabl'd him to read a novel or a poem; and to put some few fragments of it, with which his memory furnish'd him, into the mouth of a pedant, or fine gentleman.

How or when he acquir'd it we must be content to be ignorant, but of the *French* language he was somewhat a greater master than of the two that have gone before; yet, unless we except their novelists, he does not appear to have had much acquaintance with any of their writers; what he has given us of it is meerly colloquial, flows with great ease from him, and is reasonably pure: Should it be said—he had travel'd for't, we know not who can confute us: in his days indeed, and with people of his station, the custom of doing so was rather rarer than in ours; yet we have met with an example, and in his own band of players, in the person of the very famous Mr. Kempe; of whose travels there is mention in a silly old play, call'd—*The Return from Parnassus*, printed in 1606, but written much earlier in the time of Queen Elizabeth: add to this—the exceeding great liveliness and justness that is seen in many

perus'd, within a very small number, that were in print in his time or some short time after; the chroniclers his cotemporaries, or that a little preceded him; many original poets of that age, and many translators; with essayists, novelists, and story-mongers in great abundance: every book, in short, has been consulted that it was possible to procure, with which it could be thought he was acquainted, or that seem'd likely to contribute any thing towards his illustration. To what degree they illustrate him, and in how new a light they

descriptions of the sea and of promontories, which, if examin'd, shew another sort of knowledge of them than is to be gotten in books or relations; and if these be lay'd together, this conjecture of his travelling may not be thought void of probability.

One opinion, we are sure, which is advanc'd somewhere or other, is utterly so;—that this Latin, and this Italian, and the language that was last mention'd, are insertions and the work of some other hand: there has been started now and then in philological matters a proposition so strange as to carry its own condemnation in it, and this is of the number; it has been honour'd already with more notice than it is any ways intitl'd to, where the poet's Latin is spoke of a little while before; to which answer it must be left, and we shall pass on—to profess our entire belief of the genuineness of every several part of this work, and that he only was the author of it: he might write beneath himself at particular times, and certainly does in some places; but is not always without excuse; and it frequently happens that a weak scene serves to very good purpose, as will be made appear at one time or other. It may be thought that there is one argument still unanswer'd, which has been brought against his acquaintance with the Latin and other languages; and that is,—that, had he been so acquainted, it could not have happen'd but that some imitations would have crept into his writings, of which certainly there are none: but this argument has been answer'd in effect; when it was said—that his knowledge in these languages was but slender, and his conversation with the writers in them slender too of course: but had it been otherwise, and he as deeply read in them as some people have thought him, his works (it is probable) had been as little deform'd with imitations as we now see them: Shakspeare was far above such a practice; he had the stores in himself, and wanted not the assistance of a foreign hand to dress him up in things of their lending.

set the character of this great poet himself, can never be conceiv'd as it should be 'till these extracts come forth to the publick view, in their just magnitude, and properly digested: for besides the various passages that he has either made use of or alluded to, many other matters have been selected and will be found in this work, tending all to the same end,—our better knowledge of him and his writings; and one class of them there is, for which we shall perhaps be censur'd as being too profuse in them, namely—the almost innumerable examples, drawn from these ancient writers, of words and modes of expression which many have thought peculiar to Shakspeare, and have been too apt to impute to him as a blemish: but the quotations of this class do effectually purge him from such a charge, which is one reason of their profusion; though another main inducement to it has been, a desire of shewing the true force and meaning of the aforesaid unusual words and expressions; which can no way be better ascertain'd, than by a proper variety of well-chosen examples. Now,—to bring this matter home to the subject for which it has been alledg'd, and upon whose account this affair is now lay'd before the publick somewhat before it's time,—who is so short-sighted as not to perceive upon first reflection, that, without manifest injustice, the notes upon this author could not preceed the publication of the work we have been describing; whose choicest materials would unavoidably and certainly have found a place in those notes, and so been twice retail'd upon the world; a practice which the editor has often condemn'd in others, and could therefore not resolve to be guilty of in himself? By postponing these notes a while, things will be as they ought: they will then be confin'd to that which is their proper subject, ex-

planation alone, intermix'd with some little criticism; and instead of long quotations, which would otherwise have appear'd in them, the *School of Shakspeare* will be refer'd to occasionally; and one of the many indexes with which this same *School* will be provided, will afford an ampler and truer Glossary than can be made out of any other matter. In the mean while, and 'till such time as the whole can be got ready, and their way clear'd for them by publication of the book above-mention'd, the reader will please to take in good part some few of these notes with which he will be presented by and by: they were written at least four years ago, with intention of placing them at the head of the several notes that are design'd for each play; but are now detach'd from their fellows, and made parcel of the Introduction, in compliance with some friends' opinion; who having given them a perusal, will needs have it, that 'tis expedient the world should be made acquainted forthwith—in what sort of reading the poor poet himself, and his editor after him, have been unfortunately immers'd.

This discourse is run out, we know not how, into greater heap of leaves than was any ways thought of, and has perhaps fatigu'd the reader equally with the penner of it: yet can we not dismiss him, nor lay down our pen, 'till one article more has been enquir'd into, which seems no less proper for the discussion of this place, than one which we have inserted before, beginning at p. 262; as we there ventur'd to stand up in the behalf of some of the quarto's and maintain their authenticity, so mean we to have the hardiness here to defend some certain plays in this collection from the attacks of a number of writers who have thought fit to call in question their genuineness: the plays

contested are—*The Three Parts of Henry VI.*; *Love's Labour's Lost*; *The Taming of the Shrew*; and *Titus Andronicus*; and the sum of what is brought against them, so far at least as is hitherto come to knowledge, may be all ultimately resolv'd into the sole opinion of their unworthiness, exclusive of some weak surmises which do not deserve a notice: it is therefore fair and allowable, by all laws of duelling, to oppose opinion to opinion; which if we can strengthen with reasons, and something like proofs, which are totally wanting on the other side, the last opinion may chance to carry the day.

To begin then with the first of them, the *Henry VI.* in three parts. We are quite in the dark as to when the first part was written; but should be apt to conjecture, that it was some considerable time after the other two; and, perhaps, when those two were re-touch'd, and made a little fitter than they are in their first draught to rank with the author's other plays which he has fetch'd from our English history: and those two parts, even with all their re-touchings, being still much inferior to the other plays of that class, he may reasonably be suppos'd to have underwrit himself on purpose in the first, that it might the better match with those it belong'd to: now that these two plays (the first draughts of them, at least,) are among his early performances, we know certainly from their date; which is further confirm'd by the two concluding lines of his *Henry V.* spoken by the Chorus; and (possibly) it were not going too far, to imagine—that they are his second attempt in history, and near in time to his original *King John*, which is also in two parts: and, if this be so, we may safely pronounce them his, and even highly worthy of him; it being certain, that there was no

English play upon the stage, at that time, which can come at all in competition with them; and this probably it was, which procur'd them the good reception that is mention'd too in the Chorus. The plays we are now speaking of have been inconceivably mangl'd either in the copy or the press, or perhaps both: yet this may be discover'd in them,—that the alterations made afterwards by the author are nothing near so considerable as those in some other plays; the incidents, the characters, every principal outline in short being the same in both draughts; so that what we shall have occasion to say of the second, may, in some degree, and without much violence, be apply'd also to the first: and this we presume to say of it;—that, low as it must be set in comparison with his other plays, it has beauties in it, and grandeurs, of which no other author was capable but Shakspeare only: that extreamly-affecting scene of the death of young Rutland, that of his father which comes next it, and of Clifford the murtherer of them both; Beaufort's dreadful exit, the exit of King Henry, and a scene of wondrous simplicity and wondrous tenderness united, in which that Henry is made a speaker while his last decisive battle is fighting,—are as so many stamps upon these plays; by which his property is mark'd, and himself declar'd the owner of them, beyond controversy as we think: and though we have selected these passages only, and recommended them to observation, it had been easy to name abundance of others which bear his mark as strongly: and one circumstance there is that runs through all the three plays, by which he is as surely to be known as by any other that can be thought of; and that is,—the preservation of character: all the personages in

them are distinctly and truly delineated, and the character given them sustain'd uniformly throughout; the enormous Richard's particularly, which in the third of these plays is seen rising towards it's zenith: and who sees not the future monster, and acknowledges at the same time the pen that drew it, in these two lines only, spoken over a king who lies stab'd before him,—

“ What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster

“ Sink in the ground? I thought, it would have mounted.”

let him never pretend discernment hereafter in any case of this nature.

It is hard to persuade one's self, that the objectors to the play which comes next are indeed serious in their opinion; for if he is not visible in *Love's Labour's Lost*, we know not in which of his comedies he can be said to be so: the ease and sprightliness of the dialogue in very many parts of it; it's quick turns of wit, and the humour it abounds in; and (chiefly) in those truly comick characters, the pedant and his companion, the page, the constable, Costard, and Armado,—seem more than sufficient to prove Shakspeare the author of it: and for the blemishes of this play, we must seek the true cause in it's antiquity; which we may venture to carry higher than 1598, the date of it's first impression: rime, when this play appear'd, was thought a beauty of the drama, and heard with singular pleasure by an audience who but a few years before had been accustom'd to all rime; and the measure we call dogrel, and are so much offended with, had no such effect upon the ears of that time: but whether blemishes or no, however this matter be which we have brought to exculpate him, neither of these articles can with any face of justice be alledg'd against *Love's Labour's Lost*,

seeing they are both to be met with in several other plays, the genuineness of which has not been question'd by any one. And one thing more shall be observ'd in the behalf of this play;—that the author himself was so little displeas'd at least with some parts of it, that he has brought them a second time upon the stage; for who may not perceive that his famous Benedick and Beatrice are but little more than the counter-parts of Biron and Rosaline? All which circumstances consider'd, and that especially of the writer's childhood (as it may be term'd) when this comedy was produc'd, we may confidently pronounce it his true offspring, and replace it amongst it's brethren.

That the *Taming of the Shrew* should ever have been put into this class of plays, and adjudg'd a spurious one, may justly be reckon'd wonderful, when we consider it's merit, and the reception it has generally met with in the world: it's success at first, and the esteem it was then held in, induc'd Fletcher to enter the lists with it in another play, in which Petruchio is humbl'd and Catharine triumphant; and we have it in his works, under the title of "*The Woman's Prize, or, the Tamer tam'd*:" but, by an unhappy mistake of buffoonery for humour and obscenity for wit, which was not uncommon with that author, his production came lamely off, and was soon consign'd to the oblivion in which it is now bury'd; whereas this of his antagonist flourishes still, and has maintain'd it's place upon the stage (in some shape or other) from it's very first appearance down to the present hour: and this success it has merited, by true wit and true humour; a fable of very artful construction, much business, and highly interesting; and by natural and well-sustain'd characters, which no

pen but Shakspeare's was capable of drawing: what defects it has, are chiefly in the diction; the same (indeed) with those of the play that was last-mention'd, and to be accounted for the same way: for we are strongly inclin'd to believe it a neighbour in time to *Love's Labour's Lost*, though we want the proofs of it, which we have luckily for that.⁸

But the plays which we have already spoke of are but slightly attack'd, and by few writers, in comparifon of this which we are now come to of "*Titus Andronicus*:" commentators, editors, every one (in fhort) who has had to do with Shakspeare, unite all in condemning it,—as a very bundle of horrors, totally unfit for the ftage, and unlike the poet's manner, and even the ftyle of his other pieces; all which allegations are extreamly true, and we readily admit of them, but can not admit the conclufion—that, therefore, it is not his; and fhall now proceed to give the reafons of our diffent, but (firft) the play's age muft be enquir'd into. In the Induction to Jonfon's *Bartholomew Fair*, which was written in the year 1614, the audience is thus accofted:—"Hee that will fweare, *Jeronimo*, or *Andronicus* are the beft playes, yet, fhall paffe unexcepted at, heere, as a man whose judgement fhewes it is conftant, and hath ftood ftill, thefe five and twentie, or thirtie yeeres. Though

⁸ The authenticity of this play ftands further confirm'd by the testimony of Sir Afton Cockayn; a writer who came near to Shakspeare's time, and does exprefsly afcribe it to him in an epigram addrefs'd to Mr. Clement Fisher of Wincot; but it is (perhaps, fuperfluous, and of but little weight neither, as it will be faid—that Sir Afton proceeds only upon the evidence of it's being in print in his name: we do therefore lay no great ftrefs upon it, nor fhall insert the epigram; it will be found in *The School of Shakspeare*, which is the proper place for things of that fort.

it be an *ignorance*, it is a vertuous and stay'd ignorance; and next to *truth*, a confirm'd errour does well; such a one the *author* knowes where to finde him." We have here the great Ben himself, joining this play with *Feronimo, or, the Spanish Tragedy*, and bearing exprefs testimony to the credit they were both in with the publick at the time they were written; but this is by the by; to ascertain that time, was the chief reason for inserting the quotation, and there we see it fix'd to twenty five or thirty years prior to this Induction: now it is not necessary, to suppose that Jonson speaks in this place with exact precision; but allowing that he does, the first of these periods carries us back to 1589, a date not very repugnant to what is afterwards advanc'd: Langbaine, in his *Account of the English dramatick Poets*," under the article—SHAKSPEARE, does exprefsly tell us,—that "*Andronicus* was first printed in 1594, quarto, and acted by the Earls of Derby, Pembroke, and Effex, their servants;" and though the edition is not now to be met with, and he who mentions it be no exact writer, nor greatly to be rely'd on in many of his articles, yet in this which we have quoted he is so very particular that one can hardly withhold assent to it; especially, as this account of it's printing coincides well enough with Jonson's æra of writing this play; to which therefore we subscribe, and go on upon that ground. The books of that time afford strange examples of the barbarism of the publick taste both upon the stage and elsewhere: a conceited one of John Lilly's set the whole nation a madding; and, for a while, every pretender to politeness "parl'd Euphuism," as it was phras'd, and no writings would go down with them but such as were pen'd in that fantastical

manner: the fetter-up of this fashion try'd it also in comedy; but seems to have miscarry'd in that, and for this plain reason: the people who govern theatres are, the middle and lower orders of the world; and these expected laughter in comedies, which this stuff of Lilly's was incapable of exciting: but some other writers, who rose exactly at that time, succeeded better in certain tragical performances, though as outrageous to the full in their way, and as remote from nature, as these comick ones of Lilly's: for falling in with that innate love of blood which has been often objected to British audiences, and choosing fables of horror which they made horrid still by their manner of handling them, they produc'd a set of monsters that are not to be parallel'd in all the annals of play-writing; yet they were receiv'd with applause, and were the favourites of the publick for almost ten years together ending at 1595: many plays of this stamp, it is probable, have perish'd; but those that are come down to us, are as follows;—" *The Wars of Cyrus; Tamburlaine the Great, in two parts; The Spanish Tragedy, likewise in two parts; Soliman and Perseda; and Selimus, a tragedy;*"⁹ which whoever

⁹ No evidence has occur'd to prove exactly the time these plays were written, except that passage of Jonson's which relates to *Jeronimo*; but the editions we have read them in, are as follows: *Tamburlaine* in 1593; *Selimus*, and *The Wars of Cyrus*, in 1594; and *Soliman and Perseda* in 1599; the other without a date, but as early as the earliest: they are also without name of author; nor has any book been met with to instruct us in that particular, except only for *Jeronimo*; which we are told by Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors*, was written by Thomas Kyd; author, or translator rather, (for it is taken from the French of Robert Garnier) of another play, intitl'd—*Cornelia*, printed likewise in 1594. Which of these extravagant plays had the honour to lead the way, we can't tell, but *Jeronimo* seems to have the best pretensions to it; as *Selimus* has above all his other brethren, to bearing away the palm

has means of coming at, and can have patience to examine, will see evident tokens of a fashion then prevailing, which occasion'd all these plays to be cast in the same mold. Now, Shakspeare, whatever motives he might have in some other parts of it, at this period of his life wrote certainly for profit; and seeing it was to be had in this way, (and this way only, perhaps,) he fell in with the current, and gave his sorry auditors a piece to their tooth in this contested play of *Titus Andronicus*; which as it came out at the same time with the plays above-mention'd, is most exactly like them in almost every particular; their very numbers, consisting all of ten syllables with hardly any redundant, are copy'd by this Proteus, who could put on any shape that either serv'd his interest or suited his inclination: and this, we hope, is a fair and unforc'd way of accounting for "*Andronicus*;" and may convince the most prejudic'd—that Shakspeare might be the writer of it; as he might also of *Lochrine* which is ascrib'd to him, a ninth tragedy, in form and time agreeing perfectly with the others. But to conclude this article,—However he may be censur'd, as rash or ill-judging, the editor ventures to declare—that he himself wanted not the conviction of the foregoing argument to be satisfy'd who the play belongs to; for though a

for blood and murder: this curious piece has these lines for a conclusion;—

“ If this first part Gentles, do like you well,

“ The second part, shall greater murders tell.”

but whether the audience had enough of it, or how it has happen'd we can't tell, but no such second part is to be found. All these plays were the constant butt of the poets who came immediately after them, and of Shakspeare amongst the rest; and by their ridicule the town at last was made sensible of their ill judgment, and the theatre was purg'd of these monsters.

work of imitation, and conforming itself to models truly execrable throughout, yet the genius of it's author breaks forth in some places, and, to the editor's eye, Shakspeare stands confess'd: the third act in particular may be read with admiration even by the most delicate; who, if they are not without feelings, may chance to find themselves touch'd by it with such passions as tragedy should excite, that is—terror, and pity. The reader will please to observe—that all these contested plays are in the folio, which is dedicated to the poet's patrons and friends, the earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, by editors who are seemingly honest men, and profess themselves dependant upon those noblemen; to whom therefore they would hardly have had the confidence to present forgeries, and pieces supposititious; in which too they were liable to be detected by those identical noble persons themselves, as well as by a very great part of their other readers and auditors: which argument, though of no little strength in itself, we omitted to bring before, as having better (as we thought) and more forcible to offer; but it had behov'd those gentlemen who have question'd the plays to have got rid of it in the first instance, as it lies full in their way in the very entrance upon this dispute.

We shall close this part of the Introduction with some observations, that were reserv'd for this place, upon that paragraph of the player editors' preface which is quoted at p. 259; and then taking this further liberty with the reader,—to call back his attention to some particulars that concern the present edition, dismiss him, to be entertain'd (as we hope) by a sort of appendix, consisting of those notes that have been mention'd, in which the true and undoubted originals of almost all the poet's fables are clearly pointed out. But first of the

preface. Besides the authenticity of all the several pieces that make up this collection, and their care in publishing them, both solemnly affirm'd in the paragraph refer'd to, we there find these honest editors acknowledging in terms equally solemn the author's right in his copies, and lamenting that he had not exercis'd that right by a publication of them during his life-time; and from the manner in which they express themselves, we are strongly inclin'd to think—that he had really form'd such a design, but towards his last days, and too late to put it in execution: a collection of Jonson's was at that instant in the press, and upon the point of coming forth; which might probably inspire such a thought into him and his companions, and produce conferences between them—about a similar publication from him, and the pieces that should compose it, which the poet might make a list of. It is true, this is only a supposition; but a supposition arising naturally, as we think, from the incident that has been mention'd, and the expressions of his fellow players and editors: and, if suffer'd to pass for truth, here is a good and sound reason for the exclusion of all those other plays that have been attributed to him upon some grounds or other;—he himself has proscrib'd them; and we cannot forbear hoping, that they will in no future time rise up against him, and be thrust into his works: a disavowal of weak and idle pieces, the productions of green years, wantonness, or inattention, is a right that all authors are vested with; and should be exerted by all, if their reputation is dear to them; had Jonson us'd it, his character had stood higher than it does: But, after all, they who have pay'd attention to this truth are not always secure; the indiscreet zeal of an admirer, or avarice of a publisher, has frequently added things

that dishonour them; and where realities have been wanting, forgeries supply the place; thus has Homer his *Hymns*, and the poor *Mantuan* his *Ciris* and his *Culex*. Noble and great authors demand all our veneration: where their wills can be discover'd, they ought sacredly to be comply'd with; and that editor ill discharges his duty, who presumes to load them with things they have renounc'd: it happens but too often, that we have other ways to shew our regard to them; their own great want of care in their copies, and the still greater want of it that is commonly in their impressions, will find sufficient exercise for any one's friendship, who may wish to see their works set forth in that perfection which was intended by the author. And this friendship we have endeavour'd to shew to Shakspeare in the present edition: the plan of it has been lay'd before the reader; upon whom it rests to judge finally of its goodness, as well as how it is executed: but as several matters have interven'd that may have driven it from his memory; and we are desirous above all things to leave a strong impression upon him of one merit which it may certainly pretend to, that is—it's fidelity; we shall take leave to remind him, at parting, that—Throughout all this work, what is added without the authority of some ancient edition, is printed in a black letter: what alter'd, and what thrown out, constantly taken notice of; some few times in a note, where the matter was long, or of a complex nature;² but, more generally, at the bottom of the

² The particulars that could not well be pointed out below, according to the general method, or otherwise than by a note, are of three sorts;—omissions, any thing large; transpositions; and such differences of punctuation as produce great changes in the sense of a passage: instances of the first occur in *Love's Labour's Lost*, p. 54.

page; where what is put out of the text, how minute and insignificant soever, is always to be met with; what alter'd, as constantly set down, and in the proper words of that edition upon which the alteration is form'd: and, even in authoriz'd readings, whoever is desirous of knowing further, what edition is follow'd preferably to the others, may be gratify'd too in that, by consulting the Various Readings; which are now finish'd; and will be publish'd, together with the Notes, in some other volumes, with all the speed that is convenient.

ORIGIN OF SHAKSPEARE'S FABLES.

All's well that ends well.

The fable of this play is taken from a novel, of which Boccace is the original author; in whose *Decameron* it may be seen at p. 97.^b of the Giunti edition, reprinted at London. But it is more than probable, that Shakspeare read it in a book, call'd *The Palace of Pleasure*: which is a collection of novels translated from other authors, made by one William Painter, and by him first publish'd in the years 1565 and 67, in two tomes, quarto; the novel now spoken of, is the thirty-eighth of tome the first. This novel is a meagre translation, not (perhaps) immediately from Boccace, but from a French translator of him: as the original is in every body's hands, it may

and in *Troilus and Cressida*, p. 109 and 117; of the second, in *The Comedy of Errors*, p. 62, and in *Richard III.* p. 92, and 102; and *The Tempest*, p. 69, and *King Lear*, p. 53, afford instances of the last; as may be seen by looking into any modern edition, where all those passages stand nearly as in the old ones.

[All these references are to Mr. Capell's own edition of our author.]

there be seen—that nothing is taken from it by Shakspeare, but some leading incidents of the serious part of his play.

Antony and Cleopatra.

This play, together with *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and some part of *Timon of Athens*, are form'd upon *Plutarch's Lives*, in the articles—*Coriolanus*, *Brutus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Antony*: of which lives there is a French translation, of great fame, made by Amiot, bishop of Auxerre and great almoner of France; which, some few years after it's first appearance, was put into an English dress by our countryman Sir Thomas North, and publish'd in the year 1579, in folio. As the language of this translation is pretty good, for the time; and the sentiments, which are Plutarch's, breathe the genuine spirit of the several historical personages; Shakspeare has, with much judgment, introduc'd no small number of speeches into these plays, in the very words of that translator, turning them into verse: which he has so well wrought up, and incorporated with his plays, that, what he has introduc'd, cannot be discover'd by any reader, 'till it is pointed out for him.

As you like it.

A novel, or (rather) pastoral romance, intitl'd—*Euphues' golden Legacy*, written in a very fantastical style by Dr. Thomas Lodge, and by him first publish'd in the year 1590, in quarto, is the foundation of *As you like it*: besides the fable, which is pretty exactly follow'd, the outlines of certain principal characters may be observ'd in the novel: and some expressions of the novelist (few, indeed, and of

no great moment,) seem to have taken possession of Shakspeare's memory, and from thence crept into his play.

Comedy of Errors.

Of this play, the *Menæchmi* of Plautus is most certainly the original: yet the poet went not to the Latin for it; but took up with an English *Menæchmi*, put out by one W. W. in 1595, quarto. This translation,—in which the writer professes to have us'd some liberties, which he has distinguish'd by a particular mark,—is in prose, and a very good one for the time: it furnish'd Shakspeare with nothing but his principal incident; as you may in part see by the translator's argument, which is in verse, and runs thus:

“ Two twinborne sonnes, a Sicill marchant had,
 “ Menechmus one, and Soficles the other;
 “ The first his father lost a litle lad,
 “ The grandfire namde the latter like his brother:
 “ This (growne a man) long travell tooke to seeke,
 “ His brother, and to Epidamnum came,
 “ Where th' other dwelt inricht, and him so like,
 “ That citizens there take him for the same,
 “ Father, wife, neighbours, each mistaking either,
 “ Much pleasant error, ere they meete together.”

It is probable, that the last of these verses suggested the title of Shakspeare's play.

Cymbeline.

Boccace's story of *Bernabo da Ambrogivolo* (Day 2, Nov. 9,) is generally suppos'd to have furnish'd Shakspeare with the fable of *Cymbeline*: but the embracers of this opinion seem not to have been aware, that many of that author's novels (translated, or imitated,) are to be found in English

books, prior to, or contemporary with, Shakspeare: and of this novel in particular, there is an imitation extant in a story-book of that time, intitl'd—*Westward for Smelts*: it is the second tale in the book: the scene, and the actors of it are different from Boccace, as Shakspeare's are from both; but the main of the story is the same in all. We may venture to pronounce it a book of those times, and that early enough to have been us'd by Shakspeare, as I am persuaded it was; though the copy that I have of it, is no older than 1620; it is a quarto pamphlet of only five sheets and a half, printed in a black letter: some reasons for my opinion are given in another place; (v. *Winter's Tale*) though perhaps they are not necessary, as it may one day better be made appear a true one, by the discovery of some more ancient edition.

Hamlet.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, Francis de Belleforest, a French gentleman, entertain'd his countrymen with a collection of novels, which he intitles—*Histoires Tragiques*; they are in part originals, part translations, and chiefly from Bandello: he began to publish them in the year 1564; and continu'd his publication successively in several tomes, how many I know not; the dedication to his fifth tome is dated six years after. In that tome, the *troisieme Histoire* has this title;—“*Avec quelle ruse Amleth, qui depuis fut roy de Dannemarch, vengea la mort de son pere Horvuendille, occis par Fengon son frere, & autre occurrence de son histoire.*” Painter, who has been mention'd before, compil'd his *Palace of Pleasure* almost entirely from Belleforest, taking here and there a novel as pleas'd him, but he did not translate the

whole: other novels, it is probable, were translated by different people, and publish'd singly; this, at least, that we are speaking of, was so, and is intitl'd—*The Historie of Hamlet*; it is in quarto, and black letter: there can be no doubt made, by persons who are acquainted with these things, that the translation is not much younger than the French original; though the only edition of it, that is yet come to my knowledge, is no earlier than 1608: that Shakspeare took his play from it, there can likewise be very little doubt.

I *Henry IV.*

In the eleven plays that follow,—*Macbeth*, *King John*, *Richard II.* *Henry IV.* two parts, *Henry V.* *Henry VI.* three parts, *Richard III.* and *Henry VIII.*—the historians of that time, Hall, Holinshed, Stow, and others, (and, in particular, Holinshed,) are pretty closely follow'd; and that not only for their matter, but even sometimes in their expressions: the harangue of the Archbishop of Canterbury in *Henry V.* that of Queen Catharine in *Henry VIII.* at her trial, and the king's reply to it, are taken from those chroniclers, and put into verse: other lesser matters are borrow'd from them; and so largely scatter'd up and down in these plays, that whoever would rightly judge of the poet, must acquaint himself with those authors, and his character will not suffer in the enquiry.

Richard III. was preceded by other plays written upon the same subject; concerning which, see the conclusion of a note in this Introduction, at p. 261. And as to *Henry V.*—it may not be improper to observe in this place, that there is extant another old play, call'd—*The famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, printed in 1617, quarto; perhaps by some

tricking bookseller, who meant to impose it upon the world for Shakspeare's, who dy'd the year before. This play—which opens with that prince's wildness and robberies before he came to the crown, and so comprehends something of the story of both parts of *Henry IV.* as well as of *Henry V.*—is a very medley of nonsense and ribaldry; and, it is my firm belief, was prior to Shakspeare's *Henries*; and the identical “displeasing play” mention'd in the epilogue to 2 *Henry IV.*; for that such a play should be written after his, or receiv'd upon any stage, has no face of probability. There is a character in it, call'd—Sir John Oldcastle; who holds there the place of Sir John Falstaff, but his very antipodes in every other particular, for it is all dullness: and it is to this character that Shakspeare alludes, in those much-disputed passages; one in his *Henry IV.* p. 370, and the other in the epilogue to his second part; where the words “for Oldcastle dy'd a martyr” hint at this miserable performance, and it's fate, which was—damnation.

King Lear.

Lear's distressful story has been often told in poems, ballads, and chronicles: but to none of these are we indebted for Shakspeare's *Lear*; but to a silly old play which made it's first appearance in 1605, the title of which is as follows:—“The | True Chronicle Hi- | story of King LEIR, and his three | daughters, *Gonorill, Ragan, | and Cordella.* As it hath bene divers and sundry | times lately acted. | LONDON, | Printed by Simon Stafford for John | Wright, and are to bee sold at his shop at | Christes Church dore, next Newgate- | Market. 1605. (4° I. 4^b.)—As it is a great curiosity, and very scarce, the title is here inserted at large: and

for the same reason, and also to shew the use that Shakspeare made of it, some extracts shall now be added.

The author of this *Leir* has kept him close to the chronicles; for he ends his play with the re-instating king Leir in his throne, by the aid of Cordella and her husband. But take the entire fable in his own words. Towards the end of the play, at signature H 3, you find Leir in France: upon whose coast he and his friend Perillus are landed in so necessitous a condition, that, having nothing to pay their passage, the mariners take their cloaks, leaving them their jerkins in exchange: thus attir'd, they go up further into the country; and there, when they are at the point to perish by famine, insomuch that Perillus offers Leir his arm to feed upon, they light upon Gallia and his queen, whom the author has brought down thitherward, in progress, disguis'd. Their discourse is overheard by Cordella, who immediately knows them; but, at her husband's persuasion, forbears to discover herself a while, relieves them with food, and then asks their story; which Leir gives her in these words:

“ *Leir*. Then know this first, I am a Brittain borne,
 “ And had three daughters by one loving wife:
 “ And though I say it, of beauty they were sped;
 “ Especially the youngest of the three,
 “ For her perfections hardly matcht could be:
 “ On these I doted with a jealous love,
 “ And thought to try which of them lov'd me best,
 “ By asking of them, which would do most for me?
 “ The first and second flattred me with words,
 “ And vowd they lov'd me better then their lives:
 “ The youngest sayd, she loved me as a child
 “ Might do: her answer I esteem'd most vild,
 “ And presently in an outrageous mood,
 “ I turnd her from me to go sinke or swim:

" And all I had, even to the very clothes,
 " I gave in dowry with the other two :
 " And she that best deserv'd the greatest share,
 " I gave her nothing, but disgrace and care.
 " Now mark the sequell : When I had done thus,
 " I sojournd in my eldest daughters house,
 " Where for a time I was intreated well,
 " And liv'd in state sufficing my content :
 " But every day her kindnesse did grow cold,
 " Which I with patience put up well ynough
 " And seemed not to see the things I saw :
 " But at the last she grew so far incens'd
 " With moody fury, and with causelesse hate,
 " That in most vild and contumelious termes,
 " She bade me pack, and harbour some where else.
 " Then was I fayne for refuge to repayre
 " Unto my other daughter for reliefe,
 " Who gave me pleasing and most courteous words ;
 " But in her actions shewed her selfe so fore,
 " As never any daughter did before :
 " She prayd me in a morning out betime,
 " To go to a thicket two miles from the court,
 " Poynting that there she would come talke with me :
 " There she had set a shaghayrd murdring wretch,
 " To massacre my honest friend and me.
 * * * * *
 " And now I am constraind to seeke reliefe
 " Of her to whom I have bin so unkind ;
 " Whose censure, if it do award me death,
 " I must confesse she payes me but my due :
 " But if she shew a loving daughters part,
 " It comes of God and her, not my desert.
 " Cor. No doubt she will, I dare be sworne she will."

Thereupon ensues her discovery ; and, with it,
 a circumstance of some beauty, which Shakspeare
 has borrow'd,—(v. *Lear*, p. 257,) their kneeling
 to each other, and mutually contending which
 should ask forgiveness. The next page presents us
 Gallia, and Mumford who commands under him,
 marching to embarque their forces, to re-instate
 Leir ; and the next, a sea-port in Britain, and of-
 ficers setting a watch, who are to fire a beacon to
 give notice if any ships approach, in which there

is some low humour that is passable enough. Gallia and his forces arrive, and take the town by surprize: immediately upon which, they are encounter'd by the forces of the two elder sisters, and their husbands: a battle ensues; Leir conquers; he and his friends enter victorious, and the play closes thus:—

“ Thanks (worthy Mumford) to thee last of all,
 “ Not greeted last, 'cause thy desert was small;
 “ No, thou hast lion-like layd on to-day,
 “ Chasing the Cornwall King and Cambria;
 “ Who with my daughters, daughters did I say?
 “ To save their lives, the fugitives did play.
 “ Come, sonne and daughter, who did me advance,
 “ Repose with me awhile, and then for Fraunce.” [*Exeunt,*

Such is the *Leir*, now before us. Who the author of it should be, I cannot surmise; for neither in manner nor style has it the least resemblance to any of the other tragedies of that time: most of them rise now and then, and are poetical; but this creeps in one dull tenour, from beginning to end, after the specimen here inserted: it should seem he was a Latinist, by the translation following:

“ Feare not, my lord, the perfit good indeed,
 “ Can never be corrupted by the bad:
 “ A new fresh vessell still retaynes the taste
 “ Of that which first is powr'd into the same:” [*sign. H.*

But whoever he was, Shakspeare has done him the honour to follow him in a stroke or two: one has been observ'd upon above; and the reader, who is acquainted with Shakspeare's *Lear*, will perceive another in the second line of the concluding speech: and here is a third; “ Knowest thou these letters?” says Leir to Ragan, (*sign. I. 3^b.*) shewing her hers and her sister's letters commanding his death; up-

on which, she snatches at the letters, and tears them: (v. *Lear*, p. 281, 282,) another, and that a most signal one upon one account, occurs at signature C 3^b:

“ But he, the myrrour of mild patience,
“ Puts up all wrongs, and never gives reply:”

Perillus says this of Leir; comprizing therein his character, as drawn by this author: how opposite to that which Shakspeare has given him, all know; and yet he has found means to put nearly the same words into the very mouth of his *Lear*,—

“ No, I will be the pattern of all patience,
“ I will say nothing.”

Lastly, two of Shakspeare's personages, Kent, and the steward, seem to owe their existence to the above-mention'd “ flag-hair'd wretch,” and the Perillus of this *Leir*.

The episode of Gloster and his two sons is taken from the *Arcadia*: in which romance there is a chapter thus intitl'd;—“ *The pitifull state, and storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde King, and his kind sonne, first related by the son, then by the blind father.*” (*Arcadia*, p. 142, edit. 1590, 4to.) of which episode there are no traces in either chronicle, poem, or play, wherein this history is handl'd.

Love's Labour's Lost.

The fable of this play does not seem to be a work entirely of invention; and I am apt to believe, that it owes its birth to some novel or other, which may one day be discover'd. The character of Armado has some resemblance to Don Quixote; but the play is older than that work of Cervantes: of Holofernes, another singular character, there

are some faint traces in a masque of Sir Philip Sydney's that was presented before Queen Elizabeth at Wansted: this masque, call'd in catalogues—*The Lady of May*, is at the end of that author's works, edit. 1627, folio.

Measure for Measure.

In the year 1578, was publish'd in a black-letter quarto a miserable dramattick performance, in two parts, intitl'd—*Promos and Cassandra*; written by one George Whetstone, author likewise of the *Heptameron*, and much other poetry of the same stamp, printed about that time. These plays their author, perhaps, might form upon a novel of Cinthio's; (v. Dec. 8, Nov. 5,) which Shakspeare went not to, but took up with Whetstone's fable, as is evident from the argument of it; which, though it be somewhat of the longest, yet take it in his own words.

“ The Argument of the whole
Historye.

“ In the Cyttie of Julio (sometimes under the dominion of Corvinus Kinge of Hungarie and Boemia) there was a law, that what man so ever committed adultery, should lose his head, & the woman offender, should weare some disguised apparel, during her life, to make her infamously noted. This severe lawe, by the favour of some mercifull magistrate, became little regarded, untill the time of Lord Promos auctority: who convicting, a yong gentleman named Andrugio of incontinency, condemned, both him, and his minion to the execution of this statute. Andrugio had a very vertuous, and beawtiful gentlewoman

to his sister, named Cassandra: Cassandra to enlarge her brothers life, submitted an humble petition to the Lord Promos: Promos regarding her good behaviours, and fantasying her great beawtie, was much delighted with the sweete order of her talke: and doying good, that evill might come thereof: for a time, he repriv'd her brother: but wicked man, touning his liking unto unlawfull lust, he set downe the spoile of her honour, raunsome for her Brothers life: Chaste Cassandra, abhorring both him and his fute, by no perswasion would yeald to this raunsome. But in fine, wonne with the importunitie of hir brother (pleading for life:) upon these conditions, she agreed to Promos. First that he should pardon her brother, and after marry her. Promos as fearles in promisse, as carelesse in performance, with sollemne vowe, sygned her conditions: but worse than any Infydel, his will satisfyed, he performed neither the one nor the other: for to keepe his aucthoritye, unspotted with favour, and to prevent Cassandraes clamors, he commaunded the Gayler secretly, to present Cassandra with her brothers head. The Gayler, with the outcryes of Andrugio, (abhorryng Promos lewdnes,) by the providence of God, provided thus for his safety. He presented Cassandra with a felons head newlie executed, who (being mangled, knew it not from her brothers, by the Gayler, who was set at libertie) was so agreeved at this trecherye, that at the pointe to kyl her selfe, she spared that stroke, to be avenged of Promos. And devysing a way, she concluded, to make her fortunes knowne unto the kinge. She (executing this resolution) was so highly favoured of the King, that forthwith he hasted to do justice on Promos: whose judgement was, to marrye Cassandra, to repaire her crased Honour: which donne, for his hainous of-

fence he should lose his head. This maryage solemnpnised, Cassandra tyed in the greatest bondes of affection to her husband, became an earnest suter for his life: the Kinge (tendringe the generall benefit of the cōmon weale, before her special ease, although he favoured her much) would not graunt her sute. Andrugio (disguised amonge the company) sorrowing the grieve of his sister, bewrayde his safety, and craved pardon. The Kinge, to renowne the vertues of Cassandra, pardoned both him, and Promos. The circumstances of this rare Historye, in action livelye foloweth."

The play itself opens thus:—

"Actus I. Scena 1.

"Promos, Mayor, Shirife, Sworde bearer: One with a bunche of keyes: Phallax, Promos man.

"You Officers which now in Julio staye,

"Knowe you our leadge, the Kinge of Hungarie:

"Sent me Promos, to ioyne with you in sway:

"That still we may to Justice have an eye.

"And now to shew, my rule & power at lardge,

"Attentivelie, his Letters Patents heare:

"Phallax, reade out my Soveraignes chardge,

"Phal. As you commande, I will: give heedful eare.

"Phallax readeth the Kinges Letters Patents, which must be fayre written in parchment, with some great counterfeat zeale.

"Pro. Loe, here you see what is our Soveraignes wyl,

"Loe, heate his wish, that right, not might, beare swaye:

"Loe, heare his care, to weed from good the yll,

"To scourge the wights, good Lames thac disobay."

And thus it proceeds; without one word in it, that Shakspeare could make use of, or can be read with patience by any man living: and yet, besides the characters appearing in the argument, his Bawd, Clown, Lucio, Juliet, and the Provost, nay, and even his Barnardine, are created out of hints which

this play gave him; and the lines too that are quoted, bad as they are, suggested to him the manner in which his own play opens.

Merchant of Venice.

The *Jew of Venice* was a story exceedingly well known in Shakspeare's time; celebrated in ballads; and taken (perhaps) originally from an Italian book, intitl'd—*Il Pecorone*: the author of which calls himself,—Ser Giovanni Fiorentino; and writ his book, as he tells you in some humorous verses at the beginning of it, in 1378, three years after the death of Boccace: it is divided into *giornata's*, and the story we are speaking of is in the first novel of the *giornata quarta*; edit. 1565, octavo, in *Vinegia*. This novel Shakspeare certainly read; either in the original, or (which I rather think) in some translation that is not now to be met with, and form'd his play upon it. It was translated anew, and made publick in 1755, in a small octavo pamphlet, printed for M. Cooper: and, at the end of it, a novel of Boccace; (the first of day the tenth) which, as the translator rightly judges, might possibly produce the scene of the caskets, substituted by the poet in place of one in the other novel, that was not proper for the stage.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

"Queen Elizabeth," says a writer of Shakspeare's life, "was so well pleas'd with that admirable character of Falstaff, in the two parts of *Henry the Fourth*, that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to shew him in love. This is said to be the occasion of his writing *The Merry*

Wives of Windsor.” As there is no proof brought for the truth of this story, we may conclude—that it is either some playhouse tradition, or had its rise from Sir William D’Avenant, whose authority the writer quotes for another singular anecdote, relating to lord Southampton. Be this as it may; Shakspeare, in the conduct of Falstaff’s love-adventures, made use of some incidents in a book that has been mention’d before, call’d—*Il Pecorone*; they are in the second novel of that book. It is highly probable, that this novel likewise is in an old English dress somewhere or other; and from thence transplanted into a foolish book, call’d—*The fortunate, the deceiv’d, and the unfortunate Lovers*; printed in 1685, octavo, for William Whittwood; where the reader may see it, at p. 1. Let me add too, that there is a like story in the—“*Piacevoli Notti, di Straparola, libro primo*; at *Notte quarta, Favola quarta*; edit. 1567, octavo, in Vinegia.

Midsummer Night’s Dream.

The history of our old poets is so little known, and the first editions of their works become so very scarce, that it is hard pronouncing any thing certain about them: but, if that pretty fantastical poem of Drayton’s, call’d—*Nymphidia, or The Court of Fairy*, be early enough in time, (as, I believe, it is; for I have seen an edition of that author’s pastorals, printed in 1593, quarto,) it is not improbable, that Shakspeare took from thence the hint of his fairies: a line of that poem, “Thorough bush, thorough briar,” occurs also in his play. The rest of the play is, doubtless, invention: the names only of Theseus, Hippolita, and Theseus’ former loves, Antiopa and others, being

historical; and taken from the translated Plutarch, in the article—Theseus.

Much Ado about Nothing.

“Timbree de Cardōne deviēt amoureux à Messine de Feniçie Leonati, & des divers & estrāges accidens qui advindrēt avāt qu’il l’espousast.”—is the title of another novel in the *Histoires Tragiques* of Belleforest; Tom. 3. Hist. 18: it is taken from one of Bandello’s, which you may see in his first tome, at p. 150, of the London edition in quarto, a copy from that of Lucca in 1554. This French novel comes the nearest to the fable of *Much Ado about Nothing*, of any thing that has yet been discovered, and is (perhaps) the foundation of it. There is a story something like it in the fifth book of *Orlando Furioso*: (v. Sir John Harrington’s translation of it, edit. 1591, folio) and another in Spencer’s *Fairy Queen*.

Otello.

Cinthio, the best of the Italian writers next to Boccace, has a novel thus intitl’d:—“Un Capitano Moro piglia per mogliera una cittadina venetiana, un suo Alfieri l’accusa de adulterio al [*read, il, with a colon after—adulterio*] Marito, cerca, che l’Alfieri uccida colui, ch’egli credea l’Adultero, il Capitano uccide la Moglie, è accusato dallo Alfieri, non confessa il Moro, ma effendovi chiari inditii, è bandito, Et lo scelerato Alfieri, credendo nuocere ad altri, procaccia à sè la morte miseramente.” Hecatommithi, Dec. 3, Nov. 7; edit. 1565, 2 tomes, octavo. If there was no translation of this novel, French or English; nor any

thing built upon it, either in prose or verse, near enough in time for Shakespeare to take his *Othello* from them; we must, I think, conclude—that he had it from the Italian; for the story (at least, in all it's main circumstances) is apparently the same.

Romeo and Juliet.

This very affecting story is likewise a true one; it made a great noise at the time it happen'd, and was soon taken up by poets and novel-writers. Bandello has one; it is the ninth of tome the second: and there is another, and much better, left us by some anonymous writer; of which I have an edition, printed in 1553 at Venice, one year before Bandello, which yet was not the first. Some small time after, Pierre Boisteau, a French writer, put out one upon the same subject, taken from these Italians, but much alter'd and enlarg'd: this novel, together with five others of Boisteau's penning, Belleforest took; and they now stand at the beginning of his *Histoires Tragiques*, edition before-mention'd. But it had some prior edition; which falling into the hands of a countryman of ours, he converted it into a poem; altering, and adding many things to it of his own, and publish'd it in 1562, without a name, in a small octavo volume, printed by Richard Tottill; and this poem, which is call'd—*The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, is the origin of Shakspeare's play: who not only follows it even minutely in the conduct of his fable, and that in those places where it differs from the other writers; but has also borrow'd from it some few thoughts, and expressions. At the end of a small poetical miscellany, publish'd by one George Turberville in 1570, there is a poem—"On the death of Maister Arthur Brooke drownde in passing to

New-haven;" in which it appears, that this gentleman, (who, it is likely, was a military man,) was the writer of *Romeus and Juliet*. In the second tome of *The Palace of Pleasure*, (Nov. 25.) there is a prose translation of Boisteau's novel; but Shakspeare made no use of it.

Taming of the Shrew.

Nothing has yet been produc'd that is likely to have given the poet occasion for writing this play, neither has it (in truth) the air of a novel, so that we may reasonably suppose it a work of invention; that part of it, I mean, which gives it its title. For one of its underwalks, or plots,—to wit, the story of Lucentio, in almost all its branches, (his love-affair, and the artificial conduct of it; the pleasant incident of the Pedant; and the characters of Vincentio, Tranio, Gremio, and Biondello,) is form'd upon a comedy of George Gascoigne's, call'd—*Supposes*, a translation from Ariosto's *I Suppositi*: which comedy was acted by the gentlemen of Grey's-Inn in 1566; and may be seen in the translator's works, of which there are several old editions: and the odd induction of this play is taken from Goulart's *Histoires admirables de notre Temps*; who relates it as a real fact, practis'd upon a mean artisan at Bruffels by Philip the good, duke of Burgundy. Goulart was translated into English, by one Edw. Grimeston: the edition I have of it, was printed in 1607, quarto, by George Eld; where this story may be found, at p. 587: but, for any thing that there appears to the contrary, the book might have been printed before.

Tempest.

The *Tempest* has rather more of the novel in it than the play that was last spoken of: but no one has yet pretended to have met with such a novel; nor any thing else, that can be suppos'd to have furnish'd Shakspeare with materials for writing this play: the fable of which must therefore pass for entirely his own production, 'till the contrary can be made appear by any future discovery. One of the poet's editors, after observing that—the persons of the drama are all Italians; and the unities all regularly observ'd in it, a custom likewise of the Italians; concludes his note with the mention of two of their plays,—*Il Negromante* di L. Ariosto, and *Il Negromante Palliato* di Gio. Angelo Petrucci; one or other of which, he seems to think, may have given rise to the *Tempest*: but he is mistaken in both of them; and the last must needs be out of the question, being later than Shakspeare's time.

Titus Andronicus.

An old ballad, whose date and time of writing can not be ascertain'd, is the ground-work of *Titus Andronicus*; the names of the persons acting, and almost every incident of the play are there in miniature:—it is, indeed, so like,—that one might be tempted to suspect, that the ballad was form'd upon the play, and not that upon the ballad; were it not sufficiently known, that almost all the compositions of that sort are prior to even the infancy of Shakspeare.

Troilus and Cressida.

The loves of Troilus and Cressida are celebrated by Chaucer; whose poem might, perhaps, induce Shakspeare to work them up into a play. The other matters of that play (historical, or fabulous, call them which you will,) he had out of an ancient book, written and printed first by Caxton, call'd — *The Destruction of Troy*, in three parts: in the third part of it, are many strange particulars, occurring no where else, which Shakspeare has admitted into his play.

Twelfth Night.

Another of Belleforest's novels is thus intitl'd. — "Comme une fille Romaine se vellant en page servist long temps un sien amy sans estre cogneue, & depuis l'eut a mary avec autres divers discours." *Histoires Tragiques*; Tom. 4, Hist. 7. This novel, which is itself taken from one of Bandello's (v. Tom. 2, Nov. 36,) is, to all appearance, the foundation of the serious part of *Twelfth Night*: and must be so accounted; 'till some English novel appears, built (perhaps) upon that French one, but approaching nearer to Shakspeare's comedy.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Julia's love-adventures being in some respects the same with those of Viola in *Twelfth Night*, the same novel might give rise to them both; and Valentine's falling amongst out-laws, and becoming their captain, is an incident that has some resemblance to one in the *Arcadia*, (Book I. chap. 6,) where Pyrocles heads the Helots: all the other

circumstances which constitute the fable of this play, are, probably, of the poet's own invention.

Winter's Tale.

To the story-book, or *Pleasant History* (as it is call'd) of *Dorastus and Fawnia*, written by Robert Greene, M. A. we are indebted for Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*. Greene join'd with Dr. Lodge in writing a play, call'd *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, printed in 1598, in quarto, and black letter; and many of his other works, which are very numerous, were publish'd about that time, and this amongst the rest: it went through many impressions, all of the same form and letter as the play; and that so low down as the year 1664, of which year I have a copy. Upon this occasion, I shall venture to pronounce an opinion, that has been reserv'd for this place, (though other plays too were concern'd in it, as *Hamlet* and *Cymbeline*) which if it be found true, as I believe it will, may be of use to settle many disputed points in literary chronology. My opinion is this:—that almost all books, of the gothick or black character, printed any thing late in the seventeenth century, are in truth only re-impressions; they having pass'd the press before in the preceding century, or (at least) very soon after. For the character began then to be diffus'd in the printing of new books: but the types remaining, the owners of them found a convenience in using them for books that had been before printed in them; and to this convenience of theirs are owing all or most of those impressions posterior to 1600. It is left to the reader's sagacity, to apply this remark to the book in the present article; and to those he finds mention'd before, in the articles—*Hamlet* and *Cymbeline*.

Such are the materials, out of which this great poet has rais'd a structure, which no time shall efface, nor any envy be strong enough to lessen the admiration that is so justly due to it; which if it was great before, cannot fail to receive encrease with the judicious, when the account that has been now given them is reflected upon duly: other originals have, indeed, been pretended; and much extraordinary criticism has, at different times, and by different people, been spun out of those conceits; but, except some few articles in which the writer professes openly his ignorance of the sources they are drawn from, and some others in which he delivers himself doubtfully, what is said in the preceding leaves concerning these fables may with all certainty be rely'd upon.

How much is it to be wish'd, that something equally certain, and indeed worthy to be intitl'd—a Life of Shakspeare, could accompany this relation, and complete the tale of those pieces which the publick is apt to expect before new editions? But that nothing of this sort is at present in being, may be said without breach of candour, as we think, or suspicion of over much niceness: an imperfect and loose account of his father, and family; his own marriage, and the issue of it; some traditional stories,—many of them trifling in themselves, supported by small authority, and seemingly ill-grounded; together with his life's final period as gather'd from his monument, is the full and whole amount of historical matter that is in any of these writings; in which the critick and essayist swallow up the biographer, who yet ought to take the lead in them. The truth is, the occurrences of this most interesting life (we mean, the private ones) are irrecoverably lost to us; the friendly office of registering them was overlook'd by those who alone

had it in their power, and our enquiries about them now must prove vain and thrown away. But there is another sort of them that is not quite so hopeless; which besides affording us the prospect of some good issue to our endeavours, do also invite us to them by the promise of a much better reward for them: the knowledge of his private life had done little more than gratify our curiosity, but his publick one as a writer would have consequences more important; a discovery there would throw a new light upon many of his pieces; and, where rashness only is shew'd in the opinions that are now current about them, a judgment might then be form'd, which perhaps would do credit to the giver of it. When he commenc'd a writer for the stage, and in which play; what the order of the rest of them, and (if that be discoverable) what the occasion; and, lastly, for which of the numerous theatres that were then subsisting they were severally written at first,—are the particulars that should chiefly engage the attention of a writer of Shakspeare's Life, and be the principal subjects of his enquiry: to assist him in which, the first impressions of these plays will do something, and their title-pages at large, which, upon that account, we mean to give in another work that will accompany *The School of Shakspeare*; and something the *School* itself will afford, that may contribute to the same service: but the corner-stone of all, must be—the works of the poet himself, from which much may be extracted by a heedful peruser of them; and, for the sake of such a peruser, and by way of putting him into the train when the plays are before him, we shall instance in one of them;—the time in which *Henry V.* was written, is determin'd almost precisely by a passage in the chorus to the fifth act, and the concluding chorus of it

contains matter relative to *Henry VI*: other plays might be mention'd, as *Henry VIII.* and *Macbeth*; but this one may be sufficient to answer our intention in producing it, which was—to spirit some one up to this task in some future time, by shewing the possibility of it; which he may be further convinc'd of, if he reflects what great things have been done, by criticks amongst ourselves, upon subjects of this sort, and of a more remov'd antiquity than he is concern'd in. A Life thus constructed, interspers'd with such anecdotes of common notoriety as the writer's judgment shall tell him—are worth regard; together with some memorials of this poet that are happily come down to us; such as, an instrument in the Heralds' Office, confirming arms to his father; a Patent preserv'd in Rymer, granted by James the First; his last Will and Testament, extant now at Doctors Commons; his Stratford monument, and a monument of his daughter which is said to be there also;—such a Life would rise quickly into a volume; especially, with the addition of one proper and even necessary episode—a brief history of our drama, from its origin down to the poet's death: even the stage he appear'd upon, its form, dressings, actors should be enquir'd into, as every one of those circumstances had some considerable effect upon what he compos'd for it: The subject is certainly a good one, and will fall (we hope) ere it be long into the hands of some good writer; by whose abilities this great want may at length be made up to us, and the world of letters enrich'd by the happy acquisition of a masterly *Life of Shakspeare.* CAPELL.

MR. STEEVENS'S
ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE
READER.²

THE want of adherence to the old copies, which has been complained of, in the text of every modern republication of Shakspeare, is fairly deducible from Mr. Rowe's inattention to one of the first duties of an editor.³ Mr. Rowe did not print from the earliest and most correct, but from the most remote and inaccurate of the four folios. Between the years 1623 and 1685 (the dates of the first and last) the errors in every play, at least, were trebled. Several pages in each of these ancient editions have been examined, that the assertion

² First printed in 1773. MALONE.

³ "I must not (says Mr. Rowe in his dedication to the Duke of Somerset) pretend to have restor'd this work to the exactness of the author's original manuscripts: those are lost, or, at least, are gone beyond any enquiry I could make; so that there was nothing left, but to *compare the several editions*, and give the true reading as well as I could from thence. This I have endeavour'd to do pretty carefully, and render'd very many places intelligible, that were not so before. In some of the editions, especially the last, there were many lines (and in *Hamlet* one whole scene) left out together; these are now all supply'd. I fear your grace will find some faults, but I hope they are mostly literal, and the errors of the press." Would not any one, from this declaration, suppose that Mr. Rowe (who does not appear to have consulted a single quarto) had at least compared the folios with each other? STEEVENS.

might come more fully supported. It may be added, that as every fresh editor continued to make the text of his predecessor the ground-work of his own (never collating but where difficulties occurred) some deviations from the originals had been handed down, the number of which are lessened in the impression before us, as it has been constantly compared with the most authentick copies, whether collation was absolutely necessary for the recovery of sense, or not. The person who undertook this task may have failed by inadvertency, as well as those who preceded him; but the reader may be assured, that he, who thought it his duty to free an author from such modern and unnecessary innovations as had been censured in others, has not ventured to introduce any of his own.

It is not pretended that a complete body of various readings is here collected; or that all the diversities which the copies exhibit, are pointed out; as near two thirds of them are typographical mistakes, or such a change of insignificant particles, as would croud the bottom of the page with an ostentation of materials, from which at last nothing useful could be selected.

The dialogue might indeed sometimes be lengthened by other insertions than have hitherto been made, but without advantage either to its spirit or beauty; as in the following instance:

"*Lear.* No.

"*Kent.* Yes.

"*Lear.* No, I say.

"*Kent.* I say, yea."

Here the quartos add:

"*Lear.* No, no, *they would not.*

"*Kent.* Yes, *they have.*"

By the admission of this negation and affirmation, has any new idea been gained?

The labours of preceding editors have not left room for a boast, that many valuable readings have been retrieved; though it may be fairly asserted, that the text of Shakspeare is restored to the condition in which the author, or rather his first publishers, appear to have left it, such emendations as were absolutely necessary, alone admitted: for where a particle, indispensably necessary to the sense, was wanting, such a supply has been silently adopted from other editions; but where a syllable, or more, had been added for the sake of the metre only, which at first might have been irregular,⁴ such interpolations are here constantly retrenched, sometimes with, and sometimes without notice. Those speeches, which in the elder editions are printed as prose, and from their own construction are incapable of being compressed into verse, without the aid of supplemental syllables, are restored to prose again; and the measure is divided afresh in others, where the mass of words had been inharmoniously separated into lines.

The scenery, throughout all the plays, is regulated in conformity to a rule, which the poet, by his general practice seems to have proposed to himself. Several of his pieces are come down to us, divided into scenes as well as acts. These divisions were probably his own, as they are made on settled principles, which would hardly have been the case, had the task been executed by the players. A change of scene, with Shakspeare, most commonly implies a change of place, but always an entire

⁴ I retract this supposition, which was too hastily formed. See note on *The Tempest*, Vol. III. p. 68. STEEVENS.

evacuation of the stage. The custom of distinguishing every entrance or exit by a fresh scene, was adopted, perhaps very idly, from the French theatre.

For the length of many notes, and the accumulation of examples in others, some apology may be likewise expected. An attempt at brevity is often found to be the source of an imperfect explanation. Where a passage has been constantly misunderstood, or where the jest or pleasantry has been suffered to remain long in obscurity, more instances have been brought to clear the one, or elucidate the other, than appear at first sight to have been necessary. For these, it can only be said, that when they prove that phraseology or source of merriment to have been once general, which at present seems particular, they are not quite impertinently intruded; as they may serve to free the author from a suspicion of having employed an affected singularity of expression, or indulged himself in allusions to transient customs, which were not of sufficient notoriety to deserve ridicule or reprehension. When examples in favour of contradictory opinions are assembled, though no attempt is made to decide on either part, such neutral collections should always be regarded as materials for future criticks, who may hereafter apply them with success. Authorities, whether in respect of words, or things, are not always producible from the most celebrated writers;⁵ yet

⁵ Mr. T. Warton in his excellent *Remarks on the Faery Queen of Spenser*, offers a similar apology for having introduced illustrations from obsolete literature. "I fear (says he) I shall be censured for quoting too many pieces of this sort. But experience has fatally proved, that the commentator on Spenser, Jonson, and the rest of our elder poets, will in vain give specimens of his classical erudition, unless, at the same time, he brings to his work a mind intimately

such circumstances as fall below the notice of history, can only be sought in the jest-book, the satire, or the play; and the novel, whose fashion did not outlive a week, is sometimes necessary to throw light on those annals which take in the compass of an age. Those, therefore, who would wish to have the peculiarities of Nym familiarized to their ideas, must excuse the insertion of such an epigram as best suits the purpose, however tedious in itself; and such as would be acquainted with the propriety of Falstaff's allusion to *stewed prunes*, should not be disgusted at a multitude of instances, which, when the point is once known to be established, may be diminished by any future editor.

acquainted with those books, which, though now forgotten, were yet in common use and high repute about the time in which his authors respectively wrote, and which they consequently must have read. While these are unknown, many allusions and many imitations will either remain obscure, or lose half their beauty and propriety: "as the figures vanish when the canvas is decayed."

"Pope laughs at Theobald for giving us, in his edition of Shakspeare, a sample of

—— all such READING as was never read.

But these strange and ridiculous books which Theobald quoted, were unluckily the very books which SHAKSPEARE himself had studied; the knowledge of which enabled that useful editor to explain so many difficult allusions and obsolete customs in his poet, which otherwise could never have been understood. For want of this sort of literature, Pope tells us that the *dreadful Sagittary* in *Troilus and Cressida*, signifies Teucer, so celebrated for his skill in archery. Had he deigned to consult an old history, called *The Destruction of Troy*, a book which was the delight of SHAKSPEARE and of his age, he would have found that this formidable archer, was no other than an imaginary beast, which the Grecian army brought against Troy. If SHAKSPEARE is worth reading, he is worth explaining; and the researches used for so valuable and elegant a purpose, merit the thanks of genius and candour, not the satire of prejudice and ignorance. That labour, which so essentially contributes to the service of true taste, deserves a more honourable repository than *The Temple of Dullness*." STEEVENS.

An author who *catches* (as Pope expresses it) at *the Cynthia of a minute*, and does not furnish notes to his own works, is sure to lose half the praise which he might have claimed, had he dealt in allusions less temporary, or cleared up for himself those difficulties which lapse of time must inevitably create.

The author of the additional notes has rather been desirous to support old readings, than to claim the merit of introducing new ones. He desires to be regarded as one, who found the task he undertook more arduous than it seemed, while he was yet feeding his vanity with the hopes of introducing himself to the world as an editor in form. He, who has discovered in himself the power to rectify a few mistakes with ease, is naturally led to imagine, that all difficulties must yield to the efforts of future labour; and perhaps feels a reluctance to be undeceived at last.

Mr. Steevens desires it may be observed, that he has strictly complied with the terms exhibited in his proposals, having appropriated all such assistances, as he received, to the use of the present editor, whose judgment has, in every instance, determined on their respective merits. While he enumerates his obligations to his correspondents, it is necessary that one comprehensive remark should be made on such communications as are omitted in this edition, though they might have proved of great advantage to a more daring commentator. The majority of these were founded on the supposition, that Shakspeare was originally an author correct in the utmost degree, but maimed and interpolated by the neglect or presumption of the players. In consequence of this belief, alterations have been proposed wherever a verse could be harmonized, an epithet exchanged for one more

apposite, or a sentiment rendered less perplexed. Had the general current of advice been followed, the notes would have been filled with attempts at emendation apparently unnecessary, though sometimes elegant, and as frequently with explanations of what none would have thought difficult. A constant peruser of Shakspeare will suppose whatever is easy to his own apprehension, will prove so to that of others, and consequently may pass over some real perplexities in silence. On the contrary, if in consideration of the different abilities of every class of readers, he should offer a comment on all harsh inversions of phrase, or peculiarities of expression, he will at once excite the disgust and displeasure of such as think their own knowledge or sagacity undervalued. It is difficult to fix a medium between doing too little and too much in the task of mere explanation. There are yet many passages unexplained and unintelligible, which may be reformed, at hazard of whatever licence, for exhibitions on the stage, in which the pleasure of the audience is chiefly to be considered; but must remain untouched by the critical editor, whose conjectures are limited by narrow bounds, and who gives only what he at least supposes his author to have written.

If it is not to be expected that each vitiated passage in Shakspeare can be restored, till a greater latitude of experiment shall be allowed; so neither can it be supposed that the force of all his allusions will be pointed out, till such books are thoroughly examined, as cannot easily at present be collected, if at all. Several of the most correct lists of our dramattick pieces exhibit the titles of plays, which are not to be met with in the completest collections. It is almost unnecessary to mention any other than Mr. Garrick's, which, curious and

extensive as it is, derives its greatest value from its accessibility.⁶

⁶ There is reason to think that about the time of the Reformation, great numbers of plays were printed, though few of that age are now to be found; for part of Queen Elizabeth's INJUNCTIONS in 1559, are particularly directed to the suppressing of "Many pamphlets, PLAYES, and ballads: that no manner of person shall enterprize to print any such, &c. but under certain restrictions." Vid. Sect. V. This observation is taken from Dr. Percy's Additions to his *Essay on the Origin of the English Stage*. It appears likewise from a page at the conclusion of the second Vol. of the entries belonging to the Stationers' company, that in the 41st year of Queen Elizabeth, many new restraints on booksellers were laid. Among these are the following, "That no playes be printed excepte they bee allowed by such as have auctoritye." The records of the Stationers however contain the entries of some which have never yet been met with by the most successful collectors; nor are their titles to be found in any registers of the stage, whether ancient or modern. It should seem from the same volumes that it was customary for the Stationers to seize the whole impression of any work that had given offence, and burn it publicly at their hall, in obedience to the edicts of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London, who sometimes enjoyed these literary executions at their respective palaces. Among other works condemned to the flames by these discerning prelates, were the complete Satires of Bishop Hall.

Mr. Theobald, at the conclusion of the preface to his first edition of Shakspeare, asserts, that exclusive of the dramas of Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, he had read "above 800 of old English plays." He omitted this assertion, however, on the republication of the same work, and, I hope, he did so, through a consciousness of its utter falshood; for if we except the plays of the authors already mentioned, it would be difficult to discover half the number that were written early enough to serve the purpose for which he pretends to have perused this imaginary stock of ancient literature.

I might add, that the private collection of Mr. Theobald, which, including the plays of Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakspeare, did not amount to many more than an hundred, remained entire in the hands of the late Mr. Tonson, till the time of his death. It does not appear that any other collection but the Harleian was at that time formed; nor does Mr. Theobald's edition contain any intrinsic evidences of so comprehensive an examination of our eldest dramattick writers, as he assumes to himself the merit of having made. STEEVENS.

To the other evils of our civil war must be added the interruption of polite learning, and the suppression of many dramatick and poetical names, which were plunged in obscurity by tumults and revolutions, and have never since attracted curiosity. The utter neglect of ancient English literature continued so long, that many books may be supposed to be lost; and that curiosity, which has been now for some years increasing among us, wants materials for its operations. Books and pamphlets, printed originally in small numbers, being thus neglected, were soon destroyed; and though the capital authors were preserved, they were preserved to languish without regard. How little Shakspeare himself was once read, may be understood from Tate,⁷ who, in his dedication to

Whatever Mr. Theobald might venture to assert, there is sufficient evidence existing that at the time of his death he was not possessed of more than 295 quarto plays in the whole, and some of these, it is probable, were different editions of the same play. He died shortly after the 6th of September, 1744. On the 20th of October his library was advertized to be sold by auction, by Charles Corbett, and on the third day was the following lot: "295 Old English Plays in quarto, some of them so scarce as not to be had at any price: to many of which are MSS. notes and remarks by Mr. Theobald, all done up neatly in boards in single plays. They will all be sold in one lot." REED.

There were about five hundred and fifty plays printed before the Restoration, exclusive of those written by Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher. MALONE.

⁷ In the year 1707 Mr. N. Tate published a tragedy called *Injured Love, or the Cruel Husband*, and in the title-page calls himself "*Author of the tragedy called King Lear.*"

In a book called *The Actor, or a Treatise on the Art of Playing*, 12mo. published in 1750, and imputed to Dr. Hill, is the following pretended extract from *Romeo and Juliet*, with the author's remark on it:

"The saints that heard our vows and know our love,
 "Seeing thy faith and thy unspotted truth,
 "Will sure take care, and let no wrongs annoy thee.

the altered play of *King Lear*, speaks of the original as of an obscure piece, recommended to his notice by a friend; and the author of the *Tatler*, having occasion to quote a few lines out of *Macbeth*, was content to receive them from D'Avenant's alteration of that celebrated drama, in which almost every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised, or arbitrarily omitted. So little were the defects or peculiarities of the old writers known, even at the beginning of our century, that though the custom of alliteration had prevailed to that degree in the time of Shakspeare, that it became contemptible and ridiculous, yet it is made one of Waller's praises by a writer of his life, that he first introduced this practice into English versification.

It will be expected that some notice should be taken of the last editor of Shakspeare, and that his merits should be estimated with those of his predecessors. Little, however, can be said of a work, to the completion of which, both a large proportion of the commentary and various readings is as

" Upon my knees I'll ask them every day
 " How my kind Juliet does; and every night,
 " In the severe distresses of my fate,
 " As I perhaps shall wander through the desert,
 " And want a place to rest my weary head on,
 " I'll count the stars, and bless 'em as they shine,
 " And court them all for my dear Juliet's safety."

" The reader will pardon us on this and some other occasions, that where we quote passages from plays, we give them *as the author gives them*, not as the butcherly hand of a blockhead prompter may have lopped them, or as the unequal genius of some bungling critic may have attempted to mend them. Whoever remembers the merit of the player's speaking the things we celebrate them for, we are pretty confident will wish he spoke them *absolutely as we give them*, that is, *as the author gives them*."

Perhaps it is unnecessary to inform the reader that not one of the lines above quoted is to be found in the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakspeare. They are copied from the *Caius Marius* of Otway.

STEEVENS.

yet wanting. *The Second Part of King Henry VI.* is the only play from that edition, which has been consulted in the course of this work; for as several passages there are arbitrarily omitted, and as no notice is given when other deviations are made from the old copies, it was of little consequence to examine any further. This circumstance is mentioned, lest such accidental coincidences of opinion, as may be discovered hereafter, should be interpreted into plagiarism.

It may occasionally happen, that some of the remarks long ago produced by others, are offered again as recent discoveries. It is likewise absolutely impossible to pronounce with any degree of certainty, whence all the hints, which furnish matter for a commentary, have been collected, as they lay scattered in many books and papers, which were probably never read but once, or the particulars which they contain received only in the course of common conversation; nay, what is called plagiarism, is often no more than the result of having thought alike with others on the same subject.

The dispute about the learning of Shakspeare being now finally settled, a catalogue is added of those translated authors, whom Mr. Pope has thought proper to call

“ The classics of an age that *heard of none.*”

The reader may not be displeased to have the Greek and Roman poets, orators, &c. who had been rendered accessible to our author, exposed at one view; * especially as the list has received the advantage of being corrected and amplified by the Reverend Dr. Farmer, the substance of whose very decisive pam-

* See Vol. II. p. 89.

phlet is interspersed through the notes which are added in this revival of Dr. Johnson's Shakspeare.

To those who have advanced the reputation of our poet, it has been endeavoured, by Dr. Johnson, in a foregoing preface, impartially to allot their dividend of fame; and it is with great regret that we now add to the catalogue, another, the consequence of whose death will perhaps affect not only the works of Shakspeare, but of many other writers. Soon after the first appearance of this edition, a disease, rapid in its progress, deprived the world of Mr. Jacob Tonson; a man, whose zeal for the improvement of English literature, and whose liberality to men of learning, gave him a just title to all the honours which men of learning can bestow. To suppose that a person employed in an extensive trade, lived in a state of indifference to loss and gain, would be to conceive a character incredible and romantick; but it may be justly said of Mr. Tonson, that he had enlarged his mind beyond solicitude about petty losses, and refined it from the desire of unreasonable profit. He was willing to admit those with whom he contracted, to the just advantage of their own labours; and had never learned to consider the author as an under-agent to the bookseller. The wealth which he inherited or acquired, he enjoyed like a man conscious of the dignity of a profession subservient to learning. His domestick life was elegant, and his charity was liberal. His manners were soft, and his conversation delicate: nor is, perhaps, any quality in him more to be censured, than that reserve which confined his acquaintance to a small number, and made his example less useful, as it was less extensive. He was the last commercial name of a family which will be long remembered; and if Horace thought it not improper to convey the

SOSI to posterity; if rhetorick suffered no dishonour from Quintilian's dedication to TRYPHO; let it not be thought that we disgrace Shakspeare, by appending to his works the name of TONSON.

To this prefatory advertisement I have now subjoined⁸ a chapter extracted from the *Guls Horn-book*, (a satirical pamphlet written by Decker in the year 1609) as it affords the reader a more complete idea of the customs peculiar to our ancient theatres, than any other publication which has hitherto fallen in my way. See this performance, page 27.

“ C H A P. VI.

“ *How a Gallant should behave himself in a Play-house.*

“ The *theatre* is your poet's Royal Exchange, upon which, their muses (that are now turn'd to merchants) meeting, barter away that light commodity of words for a lighter ware than words, *plaudities* and the *breath* of the great *beast*, which (like the threatnings of two cowards) vanish all into aire. *Plaiers* and their *factors*, who put away the stuffe and make the best of it they possibly can (as indeed 'tis their parts so to doe) your gallant, your courtier, and your capten, had wont to be the foundest pay-masters, and I thinke are still the surest chapmen: and these by meanes that their heades are well stockt, deale upon this comical freight by the grosse; when your *groundling*, and *gallery commoner* buyes his sport by the penny, and, like a *bagler*, is glad to utter it againe by retailing.

⁸ This addition to Mr. Steevens's Advertisement was made in 1778. MALONE.

“ Sithence then the place is so free in entertainment, allowing a stoole as well to the farmer’s sonne as to your Templer: that your stinkard has the self same libertie to be there in his tobacco fumes, which your sweet courtier hath: and that your carman and tinker claime as strong a voice in their suffrage, and sit to give judgment on the plaies’ life and death, as well as the proudest *Momus* among the tribe of *critick*; it is fit that hee, whom the most tailors’ bils do make room for, when he comes, should not be basely (like a vyoll) cas’d up in a corner.

“ Whether therefore the gatherers of the publique or private play-house stand to receive the afternoone’s rent, let our gallant (having paid it) presently advance himself up to the throne of the stage. I meane not in the lords’ roome (which is now but the stage’s suburbs.) No, those boxes by the iniquity of custome, conspiracy of waiting-women, and gentlemen-ushers, that there sweat together, and the covetous sharers, are contemptibly thrust into the reare, and much new fatten is there dambd by being smothered to death in darkness. But on the very rushes where the comedy is to daunce, yea and under the state of *Cambises* himselfe must our feather’d estridge, like a piece of ordnance be planted valiantly (because impudently) beating downe the mewes and hisses of the opposed rascality.

“ For do but cast up a reckoning, what large cummings in are purs’d up by sitting on the stage. First a conspicuous eminence is gotten, by which meanes the best and most effenciall parts of a gallant (good cloathes, a proportionable legge, white hand, the Persian locke, and a tollerable beard,) are perfectly revealed.

“ By sitting on the stage you have a sign'd patten to engrosse the whole commodity of censure; may lawfully presume to be a girder; and stand at the helme to steere the passage of scænes, yet no man shall once offer to hinder you from obtaining the title of an insolent over-weening coxcombe.

“ By sitting on the stage, you may (without travelling for it) at the very next doore, aske whose play it is: and by that quest of inquiry, the law warrants you to avoid much mistaking: if you know not the author, you may raile against him; and peradventure so behave yourselfe, that you may enforce the author to know you.

“ By sitting on the stage, if you be a knight, you may happily get you a mistresse: if a mere *Fleet-street* gentleman, a wife: but assure yourselfe by continuall residence, you are the first and principall man in election to begin the number of *We three*.

“ By spreading your body on the stage, and by being a justice in examining of plaies, you shall put yourselfe into such a true scænicall authority, that some poet shall not dare to present his muse rudely before your eyes, without having first unmaskt her, rifled her, and discovered all her bare and most mystical parts before you at a taverne, when you most knightly, shal for his paines, pay for both their suppers.

“ By sitting on the stage, you may (with small cost) purchase the deere acquaintance of the boyes: have a good stoole for sixpence: at any time know what particular part any of the infants present: get your match lighted, examine the play-suits' lace, perhaps win wagers upon laying 'tis copper, &c. And to conclude, whether you be a foole or a justice of peace, a cuckold or a capten, a lord

maior's sonne or a dawcocke, a knave or an under shrieve, of what stamp soever you be, currant or counterfet, the stagelike time will bring you to most perfect light, and lay you open: neither are you to be hunted from thence though the scar-crowes in the yard hoot you, hisse at you, spit at you, yea throw dirt even in your teeth: 'tis most gentleman-like patience to endure all this, and to laugh at the silly animals. But if the rabble, with a full throat, crie away with the foole, you were worse than a mad-man to tarry by it: for the gentleman and the foole should never sit on the stage together.

“ Mary, let this observation go hand in hand with the rest: or rather, like a country-serving man, some five yards before them. Present not your selfe on the stage (especially at a new play) untill the quaking prologue hath (by rubbing) got cullor into his cheekes, and is ready to give the trumpets their cue that hees upon point to enter: for then it is time, as though you were one of the *properties*, or that you dropt of the *hangings*, to creep behind the arras, with your *tripos* or three-legged stoole in one hand, and a teston mounted betweene a fore-finger and a thumbe, in the other: for if you should bestow your person upon the vulgar, when the belly of the house is but halfe full, your apparell is quite eaten up, the fashion lost, and the proportion of your body in more danger to be devoured, then if it were served up in the Counter amongst the Poultry: avoid that as you would the bastome. It shall crowne you with rich commendation, to laugh alowd in the midst of the most serious and saddest scene of the terriblest tragedy: and to let that clapper (your tongue) be tost so high that all the house may ring of it: your lords use it; your knights are apes to

the lords, and do so too: your inne-a-court-man is zany to the knights, and (many very scurvily) comes likewise limping after it: bee thou a beagle to them all, and never lin snuffing till you have scented them: for by talking and laughing (like a ploughman in a morris) you heape *Pelion* upon *Offa*, glory upon glory: as first all the eyes in the galleries will leave walking after the players, and onely follow you: the simplest dolt in the house snatches up your name, and when he meetes you in the streetes, or that you fall into his hands in the middle of a watch, his word shall be taken for you: heele cry, *Hees such a gallant*, and you passe. Secondly you publish your temperance to the world, in that you seeme not to resort thither to taste vaine pleasures with a hungrie appetite; but onely as a gentleman, to spend a foolish houre or two, because you can doe nothing else. Thirdly you mightily disrelish the audience, and disgrace the author: marry, you take up (though it be at the worst hand) a strong opinion of your owne judgement, and inforce the poet to take pity of your weakenesse, and by some dedicated sonnet to bring you into a better paradise, onely to stop your mouth.

“ If you can (either for love or money) provide your selfe a lodging by the water side: for above the conveniencie it brings to shun shoulder-clapping, and to ship away your cockatrice betimes in the morning, it addes a kind of state unto you, to be carried from thence to the staires of your playhouse: hate a sculler (remember that) worse then to be acquainted with one ath’ scullery. No, your oares are your onely sea-crabs, boord them, and take heed you never go twice together with one paire: often shifting is a great credit to gentle-

men: and that dividing of your fare wil make the poore waterfnaks be ready to pul you in peeces to enjoy your custome. No matter whether upon landing you have money or no; you may swim in twentie of their boates over the river upon *ticket*; mary, when silver comes in, remember to pay trebble their fare, and it will make your flounder-catchers to send more thankes after you, when you doe not draw, then when you doe: for they know, it will be their owne another daie.

“ Before the play begins, fall to cardes; you may win or loofe (as fencers doe in a prize) and beate one another by confederacie, yet share the money when you meete at supper: notwithstanding, to gul the raggamuffins that stand a loofe gaping at you, throw the cards (having first torne four or five of them) round about the stage, just upon the third found, as though you had lost: it skils not if the four knaves ly on their backs, and outface the audience, there's none such fooles as dare take exceptions at them, because ere the play go off, better knaves than they, will fall into the company.

“ Now, Sir, if the writer be a fellow that hath either epigram'd you, or hath had a flirt at your mistris, or hath brought either your feather, or your red beard, or your little legs, &c. on the stage, you shall disgrace him worse then by tossing him in a blanket, or giving him the bastinado in a taverne, if in the middle of his play (bee it pastorall or comedy, morall or tragedie) you rise with a skreud and discontented face from your stoole to be gone: no matter whether the scenes be good or no; the better they are, the worse doe you distast them: and beeing on your feete, sneake not away like a coward, but salute all your gentle acquaintance

that are spread either on the rushes or on stools about you, and draw what troop you can from the stage after you: the *mimicks* are beholden to you, for allowing them elbow room: their poet cries perhaps, a pox go with you, but care not you for that; there's no musick without frets.

“ Mary, if either the company, or indisposition of the weather binde you to sit it out, my counsell is then that you turne plaine ape: take up a rush and tickle the earnest eares of your fellow gallants, to make other fooles fall a laughing: mew at the passionate speeches, blare at merrie, finde fault with the musicke, whewe at the children's action, whistle at the songs; and above all, curse the sharers, that whereas the same day you had bestowed forty shillings on an embroidered felt and feather (Scotch fashion) for your mistres in the court, or your punck in the cittie, within two houres after, you encounter with the very same block on the stage, when the haberdasher swore to you the impression was extant but that morning.

“ To conclude, hoord up the finest play-scraps you can get, upon which your leane wit may most favourly feede, for want of other stuffe, when the *Arcadian* and *Euphuis'd* gentlewomen have their tongues sharpened to set upon you: that qualitie (next to your shittlecocke) is the only furniture to a courtier that's but a new beginner, and is but in his ABC of complement. The next places that are fill'd after the play-houses bee emptied, are (or ought to be) tavernes: into a taverne then let us next march, where the braines of one hoghead must be beaten out to make up another.”

I should have attempted on the present occasion to enumerate all other pamphlets, &c. from whence particulars relative to the conduct of our early

theatres might be collected, but that Dr. Percy, in his first volume of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, (third edit. p. 128, &c.) has extracted such passages from them as tend to the illustration of this subject; to which he has added more accurate remarks than my experience in these matters would have enabled me to supply. STEEVENS.

P R E F A C E

T O

MR. M. MASON'S COMMENTS, &c.

1785.

NOT thoroughly satisfied with any of the former editions of Shakspeare, even that of Johnson, I had resolved to venture upon one of my own, and had actually collected materials for the purpose, when that,⁹ which is the subject of the following Observations, made its appearance; in which I found that a considerable part of the amendments and explanations I had intended to propose were anticipated by the labours and eccentric reading of Steevens, the ingenious researches of Malone, and the sagacity of Tyrwhitt.—I will fairly confess that I was somewhat mortified at this discovery, which compell'd me to relinquish a

⁹ Edit. 1778.



Harding Del.

Knapp Sculp.

THE DON, JOHN MONCK MASON.

Pub. Oct. 1st 1891 by E. Harding Phila. Pa.

MR. M. MASON'S PREFACE.

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P R E F A C E

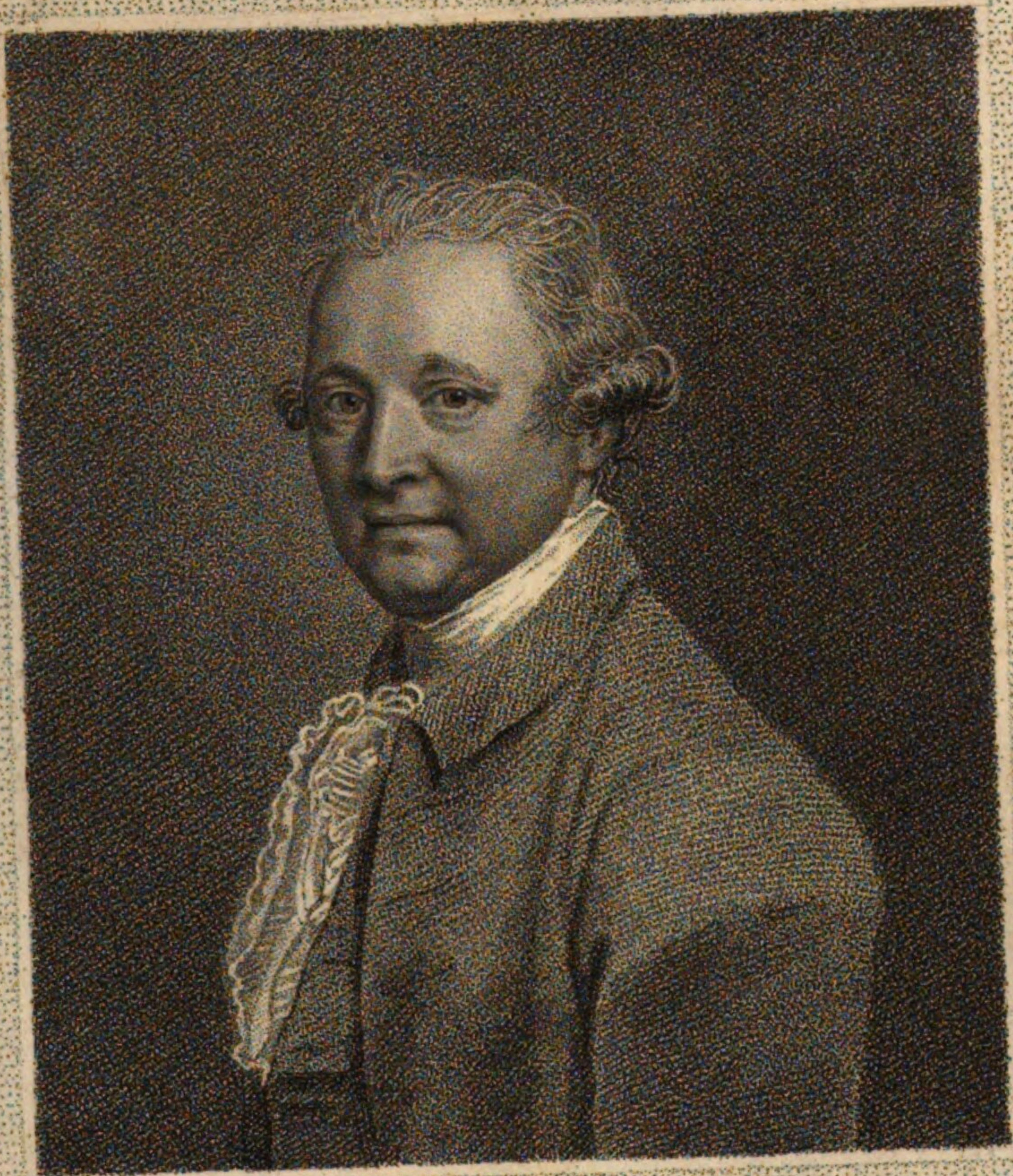
TO

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9 Edit. 1778.



Harding Del.

Knight Sculp.

THE HON^{BLE}, JOHN MONCK MASON.

Pub, Oct, 10, 1791 by E. Harding Fleet Street,

favourite pursuit, from whence I had vainly expected to derive some degree of credit in the literary world. This, however, was a secondary consideration; and my principal purpose will be answered to my wish, if the Comments, which I now submit to the publick shall, in any other hands, contribute materially to a more complete edition of our inimitable poet.

If we may judge from the advertisement prefixed to his Supplement, Malone seems to think that no other edition can hereafter be wanted; as in speaking of the last, he says, "The text of the author seems now to be finally settled, the great abilities and unwearied researches of the editor having left little obscure or unexplained."²

Though I cannot subscribe to this opinion of Malone, with respect to the final adjustment of the text, I shall willingly join in his encomium on the editor, who deserves the applause and gratitude of the publick, not only for his industry and abilities, but also for the zeal with which he has prosecuted the object he had in view, which prompted him, not only to the wearisome task of collation, but also to engage in a peculiar course of reading, neither pleasing nor profitable for any other purpose.

But I will venture to assert, that his merit is more conspicuous in the comments than the text; in the regulation of which he seems to have acted rather from caprice, than any settled principle; admitting alterations, in some passages, on very

² As I was never vain enough to suppose the edit. 1778 was entitled to this encomium, I can find no difficulty in allowing that it has been properly recalled by the gentleman who bestowed it. See his Preface; and his *Letter to the Reverend Dr. Farmer*, p. 7 and 8. STEVENS.

insufficient authority, indeed, whilst in others he has retained the antient readings, though evidently corrupt, in preference to amendments as evidently just: and it frequently happens, that after pointing out to us the true reading, he adheres to that which he himself has proved to be false. Had he regulated the text in every place according to his own judgment, Malone's observation would have been nearer to the truth; but as it now stands, the last edition has no signal advantage, that I can perceive, over that of Johnson, in point of correctness.

But the object that Steevens had most at heart, was the illustration of Shakspeare, in which it must be owned he has clearly surpassed all the former editors. If without his abilities, application, or reading, I have happened to succeed in explaining some passages, which he misapprehended, or in suggesting amendments that escaped his sagacity, it is owing merely to the minute attention with which I have studied every line of these plays, whilst the other commentators, I will not except even Steevens himself, have too generally confined their observation and ingenuity to those litigated passages, which have been handed down to them by former editors, as requiring either amendment or explanation, and have suffered many others to pass unheeded, that, in truth, were equally erroneous or obscure. It may possibly be thought that I have gone too far in the other extreme, in pointing out trifling mistakes in the printing, which every reader perceives to be such, and amends as he reads; but where correctness is the object, no inaccuracy, however immaterial, should escape unnoticed.—

— There is perhaps no species of publication whatever, more likely to produce diversity of opinion than verbal criticisms; for as there is no

certain criterion of truth, no established principle by which we can decide whether they be justly founded or not, every reader is left to his own imagination, on which will depend his censure or applause. I have not therefore the vanity to hope that all these observations will be generally approved of; some of them, I confess, are not thoroughly satisfactory even to myself, and are hazarded, rather than relied on:—But there are others which I offer with some degree of confidence, and I flatter myself that they will meet, upon the whole, with a favourable reception from the admirers of Shakspeare, as tending to elucidate a number of passages which have hitherto been misprinted or misunderstood.

In forming these comments, I have confined myself solely to the particular edition which is the object of them, without comparing it with any other, even with that of Johnson: not doubting but the editors had faithfully stated the various readings of the first editions, I resolved to avoid the labour of collating; but had I been inclined to undertake that task, it would not have been in my power, as few, if any, of the ancient copies can be had in the country where I reside.

I have selected from the Supplement, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, because it is supposed by some of the commentators to have been the work of Shakspeare, and is at least as faulty as any of the rest. The remainder of the plays which Malone has published are neither, in my opinion, the production of our poet, or sufficiently incorrect to require any comment. M. MASON.

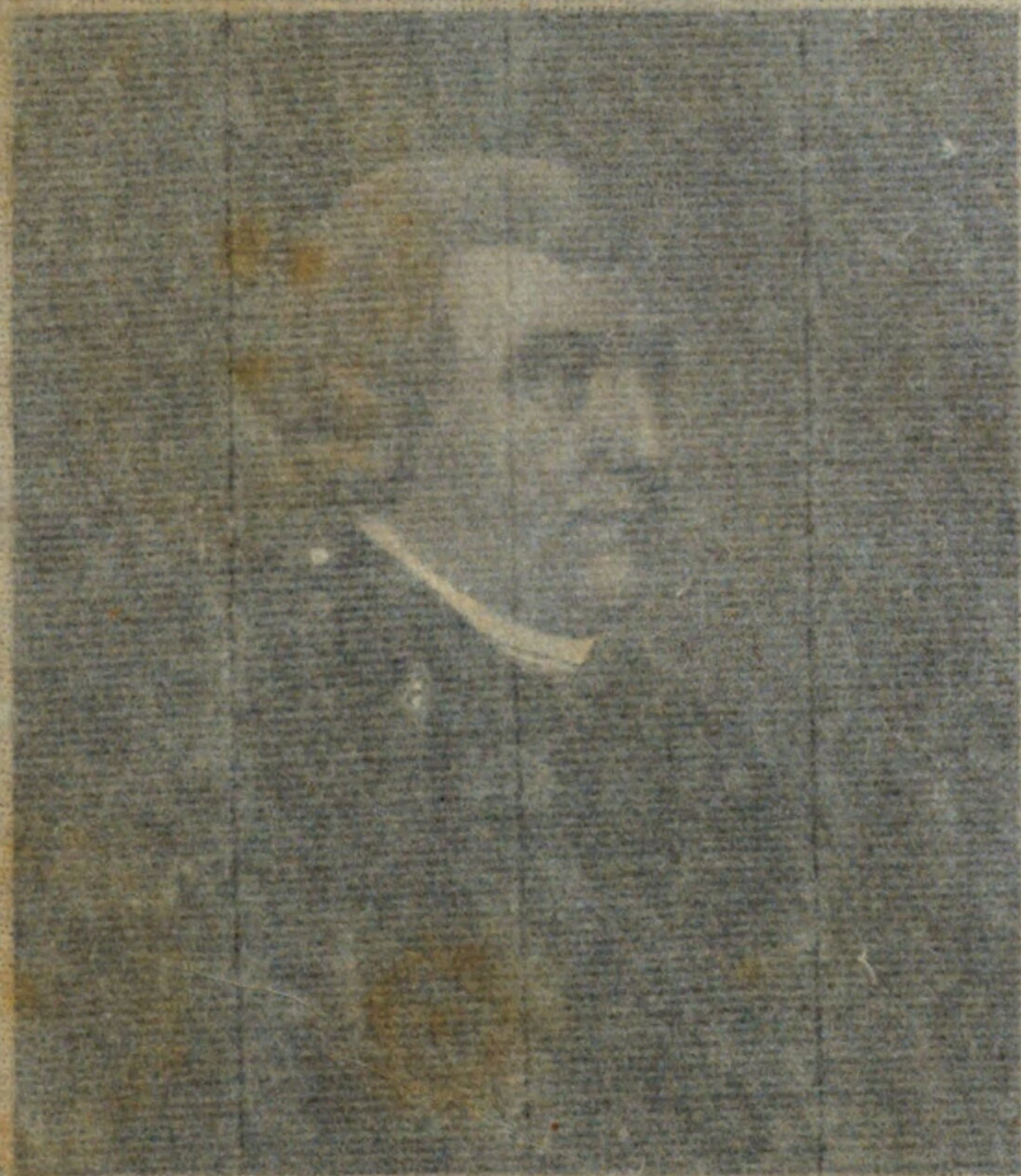
MR. MASON'S PREFACE.
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MR. REED'S
ADVERTISEMENT,

Before the Third Edition, 1785.

THE works of Shakspeare, during the last twenty years, have been the objects of publick attention more than at any former period. In that time the various editions of his performances have been examined, his obscurities illuminated, his defects pointed out, and his beauties displayed, so fully, so accurately, and in so satisfactory a manner, that it might reasonably be presumed little would remain to be done by either new editors or new commentators: yet, though the diligence and sagacity of those gentlemen who contributed towards the last edition of this author may seem to have almost exhausted the subject, the same train of enquiry has brought to light new discoveries, and accident will probably continue to produce further illustrations, which may render some alterations necessary in every succeeding republication.

Since the last edition of this work in 1778, the zeal for elucidating Shakspeare, which appeared in most of the gentlemen whose names are affixed to the notes, has suffered little abatement. The same persevering spirit of enquiry has continued to exert itself, and the same laborious search into the literature, the manners, and the customs of the times, which was formerly so successfully employed, has remained undiminished. By these aids some new information has been obtained, and some new



J. Harding del.

C. Knight Sculp.

ISAAC REED.

London Pub. May 11. 1791. by J. Harding No 132 Fleet Street.

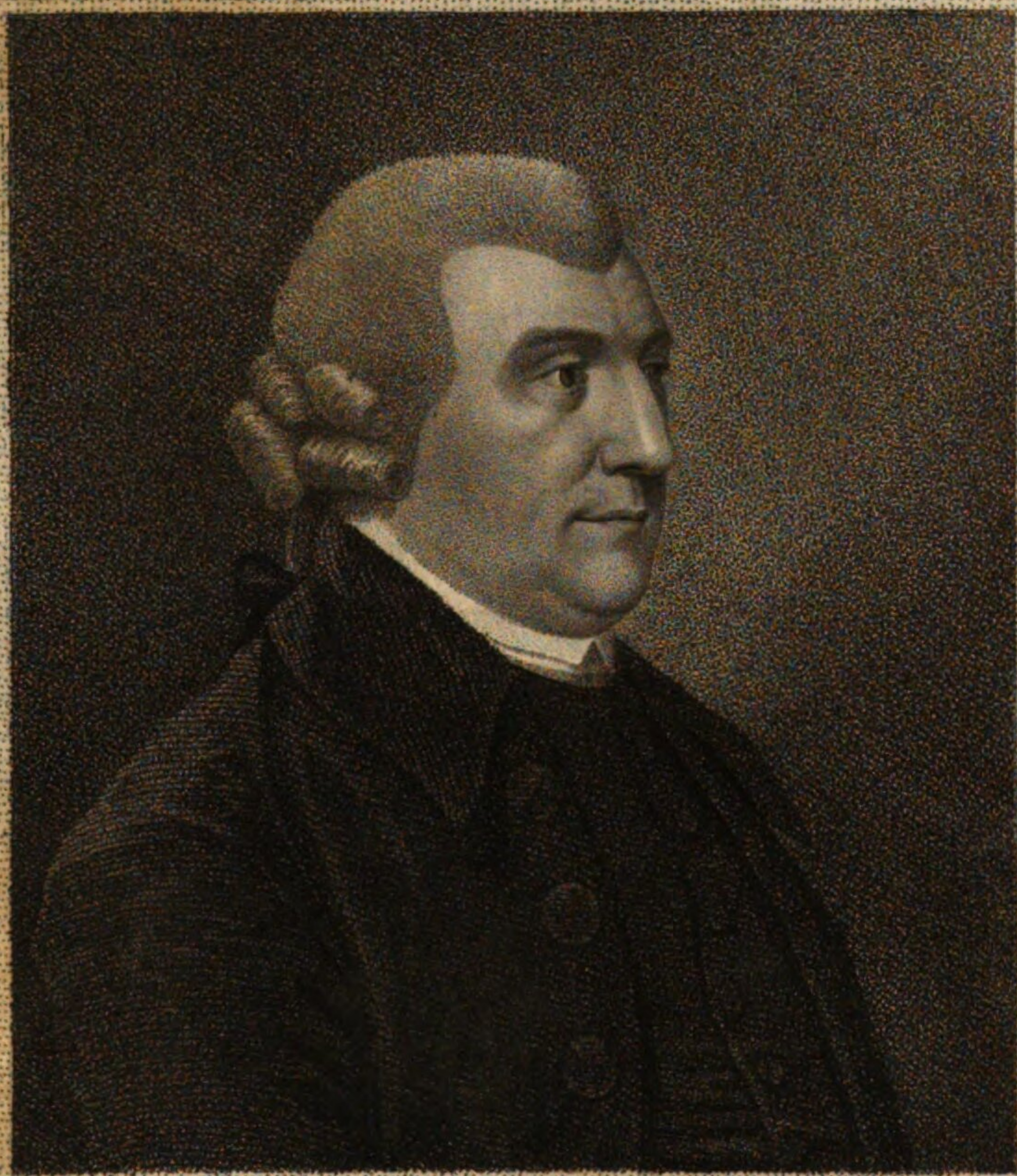
M R. R E E D ' S

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

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S Harding Del.

C Knight Sculp

ISAAC REED.

London Pub. May 11 1791. by E Harding N^o 139. Fleet Street.

materials collected. From the assistance of such writers, even Shakspeare will receive no discredit.

When the very great and various talents of the last editor, particularly for this work, are considered, it will occasion much regret to find, that having superintended two editions of his favourite author through the press, he has at length declined the laborious office, and committed the care of the present edition to one who laments with the rest of the world the secession of his predecessor; being conscious, as well of his own inferiority, as of the injury the publication will sustain by the change.

As some alterations have been made in the present edition, it may be thought necessary to point them out. These are of two kinds, additions and omissions. The additions are such as have been supplied by the last editor, and the principal of the living commentators. To mention these assistances, is sufficient to excite expectation; but to speak any thing in their praise will be superfluous to those who are acquainted with their former labours. Some remarks are also added from new commentators, and some notices extracted from books which have been published in the course of a few years past.

Of the omissions, the most important are some notes which have been demonstrated to be ill founded, and some which were supposed to add to the size of the volumes without increasing their value. It may probably have happened that a few are rejected which ought to have been retained; and in that case the present editor, who has been the occasion of their removal, will feel some concern from the injustice of his proceeding. He is however inclined to believe, that what he has

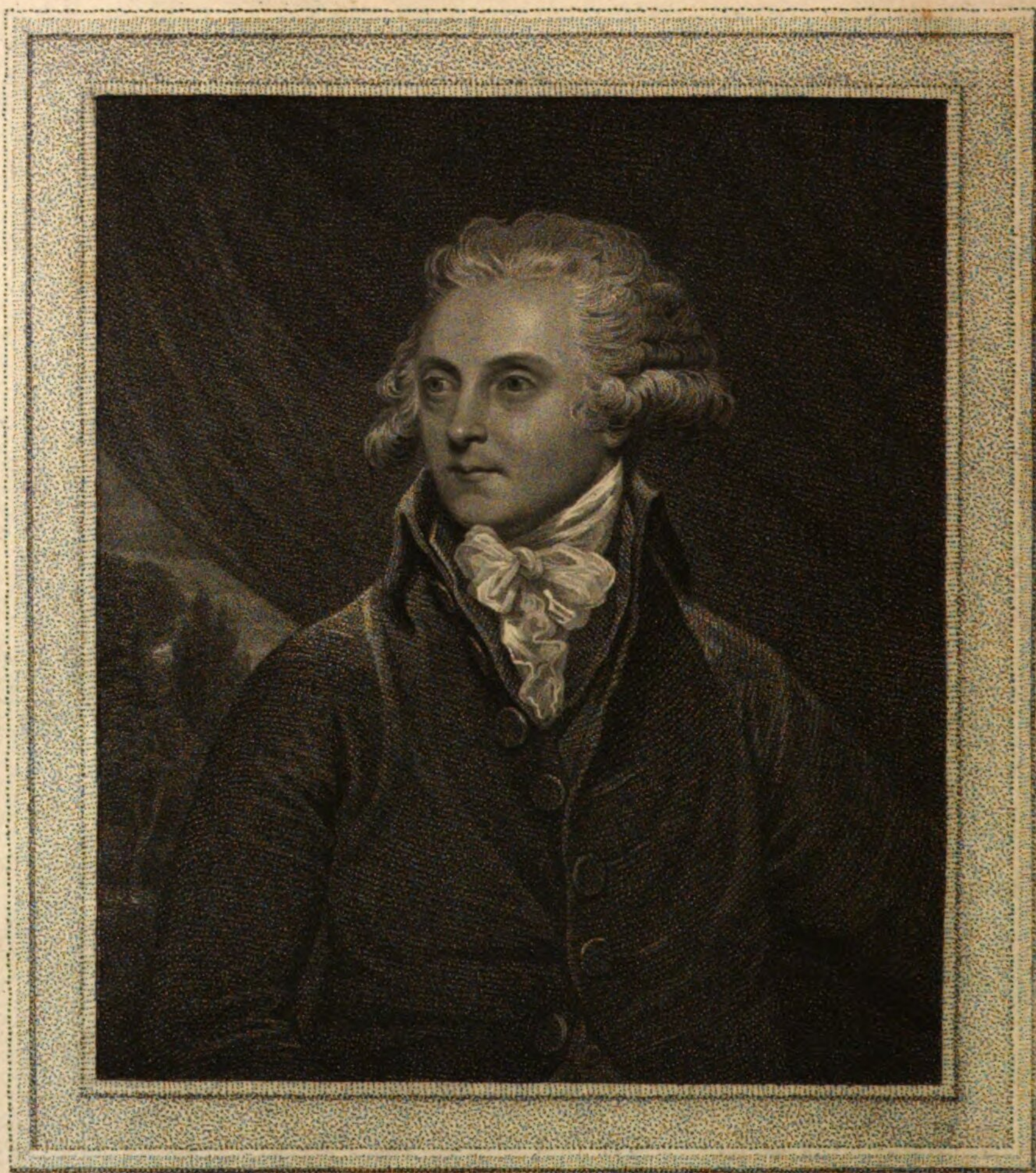
omitted will be pardoned by the reader; and that the liberty which he has taken will not be thought to have been licentiously indulged. At all events, that the censure may fall where it ought, he desires it to be understood that no person is answerable for any of these innovations but himself.

It has been observed by the last editor, that the multitude of instances which have been produced to exemplify particular words, and explain obsolete customs, may, when the point is once known to be established, be diminished by any future editor, and, in conformity to this opinion, several quotations, which were heretofore properly introduced, are now curtailed. Were an apology required on this occasion, the present editor might shelter himself under the authority of Prior, who long ago has said,

“ That when one's proofs are aptly chosen,

“ Four are as valid as four dozen.”

The present editor thinks it unnecessary to say any thing of his own share in the work, except that he undertook it in consequence of an application which was too flattering and too honourable to him to decline. He mentions this only to have it known that he did not intrude himself into the situation. He is not insensible, that the task would have been better executed by many other gentlemen, and particularly by some whose names appear to the notes. He has added but little to the bulk of the volumes from his own observations, having, upon every occasion, rather chosen to avoid a note, than to court the opportunity of inserting one. The liberty he has taken of omitting some remarks, he is confident, has been exercised without prejudice and without partiality; and therefore,



S^r J. R. Reynolds Pinxit.

C. Knight Sculp.

EDMOND MALONE. ESQ.

London Pub^d July 30 1791 by E. HARRING Fleet Street.

trusting to the candour and indulgence of the publick, will forbear to detain them any longer from the entertainment they may receive from the greatest poet of this or any other nation. REED.

Nov. 10, 1785.

MR. MALONE'S
P R E F A C E.

IN the following work, the labour of eight years, I have endeavoured, with unceasing solicitude, to give a faithful and correct edition of the plays and poems of Shakspeare. Whatever imperfection or errors therefore may be found in it, (and what work of so great length and difficulty was ever free from error or imperfection?) will, I trust, be imputed to any other cause than want of zeal for the due execution of the task which I ventured to undertake.

The difficulties to be encountered by an editor of the works of Shakspeare, have been so frequently stated, and are so generally acknowledged, that it may seem unnecessary to conciliate the publick favour by this plea: but as these in my opinion have in some particulars been over-rated, and in others not sufficiently insisted on, and as the true state of the ancient copies of this poet's writings has never been laid before the publick, I shall consider the subject as if it had not been already discussed by preceding editors.

In the year 1756 Dr. Johnson published the following excellent scheme of a new edition of Shakspeare's dramattick pieces, which he completed in 1765 :

“ When the works of Shakspeare are, after so many editions, again offered to the publick, it will doubtless be enquired, why Shakspeare stands in more need of critical assistance than any other of the English writers, and what are the deficiencies of the late attempts, which another editor may hope to supply.

“ The business of him that republishes an ancient book is, to correct what is corrupt, and to explain what is obscure. To have a text corrupt in many places, and in many doubtful, is, among the authors that have written since the use of types, almost peculiar to Shakspeare. Most writers, by publishing their own works, prevent all various readings, and preclude all conjectural criticism. Books indeed are sometimes published after the death of him who produced them, but they are better secured from corruptions than these unfortunate compositions. They subsist in a single copy, written or revised by the author; and the faults of the printed volume can be only faults of one descent.

“ But of the works of Shakspeare the condition has been far different: he sold them, not to be printed, but to be played. They were immediately copied for the actors, and multiplied by transcript after transcript, vitiated by the blunders of the penman, or changed by the affectation of the player; perhaps enlarged to introduce a jest, or mutilated to shorten the representation; and printed at last without the concurrence of the author, without the consent of the proprietor, from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate

parts written for the theatre: and thus thrust into the world surreptitiously and hastily, they suffered another depravation from the ignorance and negligence of the printers, as every man who knows the state of the press in that age will readily conceive.

“ It is not easy for invention to bring together so many causes concurring to vitiate a text. No other author ever gave up his works to fortune and time with so little care; no books could be left in hands so likely to injure them, as plays frequently acted, yet continued in manuscript: no other transcribers were likely to be so little qualified for their task, as those who copied for the stage, at a time when the lower ranks of the people were universally illiterate: no other editions were made from fragments so minutely broken, and so fortuitously re-united; and in no other age was the art of printing in such unskilful hands.

“ With the causes of corruption that make the revival of Shakspeare's dramattick pieces necessary, may be enumerated the causes of obscurity, which may be partly imputed to his age, and partly to himself.

“ When a writer outlives his contemporaries, and remains almost the only unforgotten name of a distant time, he is necessarily obscure. Every age has its modes of speech, and its cast of thought; which, though easily explained when there are many books to be compared with each other, become sometimes unintelligible, and always difficult, when there are no parallel passages that may conduce to their illustration. Shakspeare is the first considerable author of sublime or familiar dialogue in our language. Of the books which he read, and from which he formed his style, some perhaps have perished, and the rest are neglected.

His imitations are therefore unnoted, his allusions are undiscovered, and many beauties, both of pleasantry and greatness, are lost with the objects to which they were united, as the figures vanish when the canvas has decayed.

“ It is the great excellence of Shakspeare, that he drew his scenes from nature, and from life. He copied the manners of the world then passing before him, and has more allusions than other poets to the traditions and superstitions of the vulgar; which must therefore be traced before he can be understood.

“ He wrote at a time when our poetical language was yet unformed, when the meaning of our phrases was yet in fluctuation, when words were adopted at pleasure from the neighbouring languages, and while the Saxon was still visibly mingled in our diction. The reader is therefore embarrassed at once with dead and with foreign languages, with obsolescence and innovation. In that age, as in all others, fashion produced phraseology, which succeeding fashion swept away before its meaning was generally known, or sufficiently authorized: and in that age, above all others, experiments were made upon our language, which distorted its combinations, and disturbed its uniformity.

“ If Shakspeare has difficulties above other writers, it is to be imputed to the nature of his work, which required the use of the common colloquial language, and consequently admitted many phrases allusive, elliptical, and proverbial, such as we speak and hear every hour without observing them; and of which, being now familiar, we do not suspect that they can ever grow uncouth, or that, being now obvious, they can ever seem remote.

“ These are the principal causes of the obscurity of Shakspeare; to which may be added that fullness of idea, which might sometimes load his words with more sentiment than they could conveniently convey, and that rapidity of imagination which might hurry him to a second thought before he had fully explained the first. But my opinion is, that very few of his lines were difficult to his audience, and that he used such expressions as were then common, though the paucity of contemporary writers makes them now seem peculiar.

“ Authors are often praised for improvement, or blamed for innovation, with very little justice, by those who read few other books of the same age. Addison himself has been so unsuccessful in enumerating the words with which Milton has enriched our language, as perhaps not to have named one of which Milton was the author: and Bentley has yet more unhappily praised him as the introducer of those elisions into English poetry, which had been used from the first essays of versification among us, and which Milton was indeed the last that practised.

“ Another impediment, not the least vexatious to the commentator, is the exactness with which Shakspeare followed his author. Instead of dilating his thoughts into generalities, and expressing incidents with poetical latitude, he often combines circumstances unnecessary to his main design, only because he happened to find them together. Such passages can be illustrated only by him who has read the same story in the very book which Shakspeare consulted.

“ He that undertakes an edition of Shakspeare, has all these difficulties to encounter, and all these obstructions to remove.

“ The corruptions of the text will be corrected by a careful collation of the oldest copies, by which it is hoped that many restorations may yet be made; at least it will be necessary to collect and note the variations as materials for future criticks, for it very often happens that a wrong reading has affinity to the right.

“ In this part all the present editions are apparently and intentionally defective. The criticks did not so much as wish to facilitate the labour of those that followed them. The same books are still to be compared; the work that has been done, is to be done again, and no single edition will supply the reader with a text on which he can rely as the best copy of the works of Shakspeare.

“ The edition now proposed will at least have this advantage over others. It will exhibit all the observable varieties of all the copies that can be found; that, if the reader is not satisfied with the editor's determination, he may have the means of choosing better for himself.

“ Where all the books are evidently vitiated, and collation can give no assistance, then begins the task of critical sagacity: and some changes may well be admitted in a text never settled by the author, and so long exposed to caprice and ignorance. But nothing shall be imposed, as in the Oxford edition, without notice of the alteration; nor shall conjecture be wantonly or unnecessarily indulged.

“ It has been long found, that very specious emendations do not equally strike all minds with conviction, nor even the same mind at different times; and therefore, though perhaps many alterations may be proposed as eligible, very few will be obtruded as certain. In a language so ungrammatical as the English, and so licentious as that of

Shakspeare, emendatory criticism is always hazardous; nor can it be allowed to any man who is not particularly versed in the writings of that age, and particularly studious of his author's diction. There is danger lest peculiarities should be mistaken for corruptions, and passages rejected as unintelligible, which a narrow mind happens not to understand.

" All the former criticks have been so much employed on the correction of the text, that they have not sufficiently attended to the elucidation of passages obscured by accident or time. The editor will endeavour to read the books which the author read, to trace his knowledge to its source, and compare his copies with the originals. If in this part of his design he hopes to attain any degree of superiority to his predecessors, it must be considered, that he has the advantage of their labours; that part of the work being already done, more care is naturally bestowed on the other part; and that, to declare the truth, Mr. Rowe and Mr. Pope were very ignorant of the ancient English literature; Dr. Warburton was detained by more important studies; and Mr. Theobald, if fame be just to his memory, considered learning only as an instrument of gain, and made no further inquiry after his author's meaning, when once he had notes sufficient to embellish his page with the expected decorations.

" With regard to obsolete or peculiar diction, the editor may perhaps claim some degree of confidence, having had more motives to consider the whole extent of our language than any other man from its first formation. He hopes, that, by comparing the works of Shakspeare with those of writers who lived at the same time, immediately preceded, or immediately followed him, he shall be

able to ascertain his ambiguities, disentangle his intricacies, and recover the meaning of words now lost in the darkness of antiquity.

“ When therefore any obscurity arises from an allusion to some other book, the passage will be quoted. When the diction is entangled, it will be cleared by a paraphrase or interpretation. When the sense is broken by the suppression of part of the sentiment in pleasantry or passion, the connection will be supplied. When any forgotten custom is hinted, care will be taken to retrieve and explain it. The meaning assigned to doubtful words will be supported by the authorities of other writers, or by parallel passages of Shakspeare himself.

“ The observation of faults and beauties is one of the duties of an annotator, which some of Shakspeare's editors have attempted, and some have neglected. For this part of his task, and for this only, was Mr. Pope eminently and indisputably qualified: nor has Dr. Warburton followed him with less diligence or less success. But I never observed that mankind was much delighted or improved by their asterisks, commas, or double commas; of which the only effect is, that they preclude the pleasure of judging for ourselves, teach the young and ignorant to decide without principles; defeat curiosity and discernment by leaving them less to discover; and, at last, shew the opinion of the critick, without the reasons on which it was founded, and without affording any light by which it may be examined.

“ The editor, though he may less delight his own vanity, will probably please his reader more, by supposing him equally able with himself to judge of beauties and faults, which require no

previous acquisition of remote knowledge. A description of the obvious scenes of nature, a representation of general life, a sentiment of reflection or experience, a deduction of conclusive argument, a forcible eruption of effervescent passion, are to be considered as proportionate to common apprehension, unassisted by critical officiousness; since to conceive them, nothing more is requisite than acquaintance with the general state of the world, and those faculties which he must always bring with him who would read Shakspeare.

“ But when the beauty arises from some adaptation of the sentiment to customs worn out of use, to opinions not universally prevalent, or to any accidental or minute particularity, which cannot be supplied by common understanding, or common observation, it is the duty of a commentator to lend his assistance.

“ The notice of beauties and faults thus limited will make no distinct part of the design, being reducible to the explanation of obscure passages.

“ The editor does not however intend to preclude himself from the comparison of Shakspeare's sentiments or expression with those of ancient or modern authors, or from the display of any beauty not obvious to the students of poetry; for as he hopes to leave his author better understood, he wishes likewise to procure him more rational approbation.

“ The former editors have affected to slight their predecessors: but in this edition all that is valuable will be adopted from every commentator, that posterity may consider it as including all the rest, and exhibit whatever is hitherto known of the great father of the English drama.”

Though Dr. Johnson has here pointed out with his usual perspicuity and vigour, the true course to be

taken by an editor of Shakspeare, some of the positions which he has laid down may be controverted, and some are indubitably not true. It is not true that the plays of this author were more incorrectly printed than those of any of his contemporaries: for in the plays of Marlowe, Marston, Fletcher, Massinger, and others, as many errors may be found. It is not true that the art of printing was in no other age in so unskilful hands. Nor is it true, in the latitude in which it is stated, that "these plays were printed from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre:" two only of all his dramas, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *King Henry V.* appear to have been thus thrust into the world, and of the former it is yet a doubt whether it is a first sketch or an imperfect copy. I do not believe that words were then adopted at pleasure from the neighbouring languages, or that an antiquated diction was then employed by any poet but Spenser. That the obscurities of our author, to whatever cause they may be referred, do not arise from the paucity of contemporary writers, the present edition may furnish indisputable evidence. And lastly, if it be true, that "very few of Shakspeare's lines were difficult to his audience, and that he used such expressions as were then common," (a position of which I have not the smallest doubt,) it cannot be true, that "his reader is embarrassed at once with dead and with foreign languages, with obsoleteness and innovation."

When Mr. Pope first undertook the task of revising these plays, every anomaly of language, and every expression that was not understood at that time, were considered as errors or corruptions, and the text was altered, or amended, as it was called, at pleasure. The principal writers of the

early part of this century seem never to have looked behind them, and to have considered their own era and their own phraseology as the standard of perfection: hence from the time of Pope's edition, for above twenty years, to alter Shakspeare's text and to restore it, were considered as synonymous terms. During the last thirty years our principal employment has been to *restore*, in the true sense of the word; to eject the arbitrary and capricious innovations made by our predecessors from ignorance of the phraseology and customs of the age in which Shakspeare lived.

As on the one hand our poet's text has been described as more corrupt than it really is, so on the other, the labour required to investigate fugitive allusions, to explain and justify obsolete phraseology by parallel passages from contemporary authors, and to form a genuine text by a faithful collation of the original copies, has not perhaps had that notice to which it is entitled; for undoubtedly it is a laborious and a difficult task: and the due execution of this it is, which can alone entitle an editor of Shakspeare to the favour of the publick.

I have said that the comparative value of the various ancient copies of Shakspeare's plays has never been precisely ascertained. To prove this, it will be necessary to go into a long and minute discussion, for which, however, no apology is necessary: for though to explain and illustrate the writings of our poet is a principal duty of his editor, to ascertain his genuine text, to fix what is to be explained, is his first and immediate object: and till it be established which of the ancient copies is entitled to preference, we have no criterion by which the text can be ascertained.

Fifteen of Shakspeare's plays were printed in quarto antecedent to the first complete collection of his works, which was published by his fellow-comedians in 1623. These plays are, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *The Two parts of King Henry IV.* *King Richard II.* *King Richard III.* *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Henry V.* *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*.

The players, when they mention these copies, represent them all as mutilated and imperfect; but this was merely thrown out to give an additional value to their own edition, and is not strictly true of any but two of the whole number; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *King Henry V.*—With respect to the other thirteen copies, though undoubtedly they were all surreptitious, that is, stolen from the playhouse, and printed without the consent of the author or the proprietors, they *in general* are preferable to the exhibition of the same plays in the folio; for this plain reason, because, instead of printing these plays from a manuscript, the editors of the folio, to save labour, or from some other motive, printed the greater part of them from the very copies which they represented as maimed and imperfect, and frequently from a late, instead of the earliest, edition; in some instances with additions and alterations of their own. Thus therefore the first folio, as far as respects the plays above enumerated, labours under the disadvantage of being at least a second, and in some cases a third, edition of these quartos. I do not however mean to say, that many valuable corrections of passages undoubtedly corrupt in the quartos are not found in the folio copy; or that a single line of these plays should be printed by a careful editor without a

minute examination, and collation of both copies; but those quartos were in general the basis on which the folio editors built, and are entitled to our particular attention and examination as *first* editions.

It is well known to those who are conversant with the business of the press, that, (unless when the author corrects and revises his own works,) as editions of books are multiplied, their errors are multiplied also; and that consequently every such edition is more or less correct, as it approaches nearer to or is more distant from the first. A few instances of the gradual progress of corruption will fully evince the truth of this assertion.

In the original copy of *King Richard II.* 4to. 1597, Act II. sc. ii. are these lines:

“ You promis’d, when you parted with the king,
“ To lay aside *life-harming* heavinefs.”

In a subsequent quarto, printed in 1608, instead of *life-harming* we find *HALF-harming*; which being perceived by the editor of the folio to be nonsense, he substituted, instead of it,—*SELF-harming* heavinefs.

In the original copy of *King Henry IV.* P. I. printed in 1598, Act IV. sc. iv. we find—

“ And what with Owen Glendower’s absence thence,
“ (Who with them was a *rated finew* too,)” &c.

In the fourth quarto printed in 1608, the article being omitted by the negligence of the compositor, and the line printed thus,

“ Who with them was rated finew too,”—

the editor of the next quarto, (which was copied by the folio,) instead of examining the first edition,

amended the error (leaving the metre still imperfect) by reading—

“ Who with them was *rated* firmly too.”

So, in the same play, Act I. sc. iii. instead of the reading of the earliest copy—

“ Why what a *candy* deal of courtesy—”

caudy being printed in the first folio instead of *candy*, by the accidental inversion of the letter *n*, the editor of the second folio corrected the error by substituting *gawdy*.

So, in the same play, Act III. sc. i. instead of the reading of the earliest impression,

“ The frame and huge foundation of the earth—”

in the second and the subsequent quartos, the line by the negligence of the compositor was exhibited without the word *huge* :^a

“ The frame and foundation of the earth—”

and the editor of the folio, finding the metre imperfect, supplied it by reading,

“ The frame and *the* foundation of the earth.”

Another line in Act V. sc. ult. is thus exhibited in the quarto, 1598 :

“ But that the *earthy* and cold hand of death—”

Earth being printed instead of *earthy*, in the next and the subsequent quarto copies, the editor of the folio amended the line thus :

“ But that the *earth* and *the* cold hand of death—.”

^a This reading (undoubtedly the best) is judiciously restored by Mr. Malone; and in the present edition has been as unluckily omitted. See Vol. VIII. p. 487, where, instead of the first article—*the*, the reader is requested to supply the epithet—*huge*.

Again, in the preceding scene, we find in the first copy,

“ I was not born a yielder, thou proud Scot.”—

instead of which in the fifth quarto, 1613, we have

“ I was not born *to yield*, thou proud Scot.”

This being the copy that was used by the editor of the folio, instead of examining the most ancient impression, he corrected the error according to his own fancy, and probably while the work was passing through the press, by reading—

“ I was not born *to yield*, thou *haughty* Scot.”

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet says to her nurse,

“ In faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.”

and this line in the first folio being corruptly exhibited—

“ In faith, I am sorry that thou art *so* well.”

the editor of the second folio, to obtain some sense, printed—

“ In faith, I am sorry that thou art *so ill*.”

In the quarto copy of the same play, published in 1599, we find—

“ ————— O happy dagger,

“ This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.”

In the next quarto, 1609, the last line is thus represented:

“ 'Tis is thy sheath,” &c.

The editor of the folio, seeing that this was manifestly wrong, absurdly corrected the error thus:

“ 'Tis *in* thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.”

Again, in the same play, quarto, 1599, *misbav'd* being corruptly printed for *misbehav'd*.—

“ But like a *misbav'd* and fullen wench—”

the editor of the first folio, to obtain something like sense, reads—

“ But like a *misshap'd* and fullen wench—.”

and instead of this, the editor of the second folio, for the sake of metre, gives us—

“ But like a *misshap'd* and a fullen wench—.”

Again, in the first scene of *King Richard III.* quarto, 1597, we find this line :

“ That *tempers* him to this extremity.”

In the next quarto, and all subsequent, *tempts* is corruptly printed instead of *tempers*. The line then wanting a syllable, the editor of the folio printed it thus :

“ That *tempts* him to this *barsh* extremity.”

Not to weary my reader, I shall add but two more instances, from *Romeo and Juliet* :

“ Away to heaven, respective lenity,

“ And *fire-ey'd* fury be my conduct now !”

says Romeo, when provoked by the appearance of his rival. Instead of this, which is the reading of the quarto 1597, the line, in the quarto, 1599, is thus corruptly exhibited :

“ And fire *end* fury be my conduct now !”

In the subsequent quarto copy *and* was substituted for *end* ; and accordingly in the folio the poet's

fine imagery is entirely lost, and Romeo exclaims,

“ And *fire and fury* be my conduct now !”

The other instance in the same play is not less remarkable. In the quarto, 1599, the Friar, addressing Romeo, is made to say,

“ Thou *puts up* thy fortune, and thy love.”

The editor of the folio perceiving here a gross corruption, substituted these words:

“ Thou *puttest up* thy fortune, and thy love ;”

not perceiving that *up* was a misprint for *upon*, and *puts* for *pouts*, (which according to the ancient mode was written instead of *powt'st*,) as he would have found by looking into another copy without a date, and as he might have conjectured from the corresponding line in the original play printed in 1597, had he ever examined it :

“ Thou *frown'st upon* thy fate, that smiles on thee.”

So little known indeed was the value of the early impressions of books, (not revised or corrected by their authors,) that King Charles the First, though a great admirer of our poet, was contented with the *second* folio edition of his plays, unconscious of the numerous misrepresentations and interpolations by which every page of that copy is disfigured; and in a volume of the quarto plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, which formerly belonged to that king, and is now in my collection, I did not find a single first impression. In like manner Sir William D'Avenant, when he made his alteration of the play of *Macbeth*, appears to have used the third folio printed in 1664.³

³ In that copy *anoint* being corruptly printed instead of *aroint*,

“ *Anoint* thee, witch, the rump-fed ronyon cries,”
the error was implicitly adopted by D'Avenant.

The various readings found in the different impressions of the quarto copies are frequently mentioned by the late editors: it is obvious from what has been already stated, that the first edition of each play is alone of any authority,⁴ and accordingly to no other have I paid any attention. All the variations in the subsequent quartos were made by accident or caprice. Where, however, there are two editions printed in the same year, or an undated copy, it is necessary to examine each of them, because which of them was first, can not be ascertained; and being each printed from a manuscript, they carry with them a degree of authority to which a re-impression cannot be entitled. Of the tragedy of *King Lear* there are no less than three copies, varying from each other, printed for the same bookseller, and in the same year.

Of all the plays of which there are no quarto copies extant, the first folio, printed in 1623, is the only authentick edition.

An opinion has been entertained by some that the second impression of that book, published in 1632, has a similar claim to authenticity. "Whoever has any of the folios, (says Dr. Johnson,) has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first, from which (he afterwards adds,) the subsequent folios never differ but by accident or negligence." Mr. Steevens, however, does not subscribe to this opinion. "The edition of 1632,

⁴ Except only in the instance of *Romeo and Juliet*, where the first copy, printed in 1597, appears to be an imperfect sketch, and therefore cannot be entirely relied on. Yet even this furnishes many valuable corrections of the more perfect copy of that tragedy in its present state, printed in 1599.

(says that gentleman,) is not without value; for though it be in some places more incorrectly printed than the preceding one, it has likewise the advantage of various readings, which are not merely such as re-iteration of copies will naturally produce."

What Dr. Johnson has stated, is not quite accurate. The second folio does indeed very frequently differ from the first by negligence or chance; but much more frequently by the editor's profound ignorance of our poet's phraseology and metre, in consequence of which there is scarce a page of the book which is not disfigured by the capricious alterations introduced by the person to whom the care of that impression was entrusted. This person in fact, whoever he was, and Mr. Pope, were the two great corrupters of our poet's text; and I have no doubt that if the arbitrary alterations introduced by these two editors were numbered, in the plays of which no quarto copies are extant, they would greatly exceed all the corruptions and errors of the press in the original and only authentic copy of those plays. Though my judgment on this subject has been formed after a very careful examination, I cannot expect that it should be received on my mere assertion: and therefore it is necessary to substantiate it by proof. This cannot be effected but by a long, minute, and what I am afraid will appear to many, an uninteresting disquisition: but let it still be remembered that to ascertain the genuine text of these plays is an object of great importance.

On a revision of the second folio printed in 1632, it will be found, that the editor of that book was entirely ignorant of our poet's phraseology and metre, and that various alterations were made by

him, in consequence of that ignorance, which render his edition of no value whatsoever.

I. His ignorance of Shakspeare's phraseology is proved by the following among many other instances.

He did not know that the double negative was the customary and authorized language of the age of Queen Elizabeth, and therefore, instead of—

“Nor to her bed *no* homage do I owe.”

Comedy of Errors, Act III. sc. ii.

he printed—

“Nor to her bed *a* homage do I owe.”

So, in *As you like it*, Act II. sc. iv. instead of—
“I can *not* go no further,” he printed—“I can go no further.”

In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act III. sc. i. Hero, speaking of Beatrice, says,

“—— there will she hide her,

“*To listen our propose.*”

for which the second folio substitutes—

“—— there will she hide her,

“*To listen to our purpose.*”

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act I. sc. ii.

“Thou dost make possible, things not so held.”

The plain meaning is, thou dost make those things possible, which are held to be impossible. But the editor of the second folio, not understanding the line, reads—

“Thou dost make possible things not *to be* so held;”

i. e. thou dost make those things to be esteemed

impossible, which are possible: the very reverse of what the poet meant.

In the same play is this line:

“ I am appointed *him* to murder you.”

Here the editor of the second folio, not being conversant with Shakspeare's irregular language, reads—

“ I appointed *him* to murder you.”

Again, in *Macbeth*:

“ This diamond he greets your wife withal,

“ By the name of most kind hostess; and *shut up*

“ In measureless content.”

Not knowing that *shut up* meant *concluded*, the editor of the second folio reads—

“ ——— and shut *it* up [i. e. the diamond]

“ In measureless content.”

In the same play the word *lated*, (“ Now spurs the '*lated* traveller—”) not being understood, is changed to *latest*, and *Colmes-Inch* to *Colmes-bill*.

Again, *ibidem*: when Macbeth says, “ Hang those that talk of fear,” it is evident that these words are not a wish or imprecation, but an injunction to hang all the cowards in Scotland. The editor of the second folio, however, considering the passage in the former light, reads:

“ Hang them that *stand in* fear!”

From the same ignorance,

“ And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

“ The way to *dusty* death.”

is changed to—

“ And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

“ The way to *study* death.”

In *King Richard II.* Bolingbroke says,

“ And I must find that title in your *tongue*,” &c.

i. e. you must address me by that title. But this not being understood, *town* is in the second folio substituted for *tongue*.

The double comparative is common in the plays of Shakspeare. Yet, instead of

“ ——— I'll give my reasons
“ *More worthier* than their voices.”

Coriolanus, Act III. sc. i. First Folio.

we have in the second copy,

“ *More worthy* than their voices.”

So, in *Othello*, Act I. sc. v.—“ opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more *safer* voice on you,”—is changed in the second folio, to—“ opinion, &c. throws a more *safe* voice on you.”

Again, in *Hamlet*, Act III. sc. ii. instead of—“ your wisdom should shew itself more *richer*, to signify this to the doctor;” we find in the copy of 1632, “ ——— your wisdom should shew itself more *rich*,” &c.

In *The Winter's Tale*, the word *vast* not being understood,

“ ——— they shook hands as over a *vast*.” First Folio.

we find in the second copy, “ — as over a *vast sea*.”

In *King John*, Act V. sc. v. first folio, are these lines :

“ ——— The English lords
“ By his persuasion are *again* fallen off.”

The editor of the second folio, thinking, I suppose, that as these lords had not *before* deserted the *French* king, it was improper to say that they had

again fallen off, substituted "— are *at last* fallen off;" not perceiving that the meaning is, that these lords had gone back again to their own countrymen, whom they had before deserted.

In *King Henry VIII.* Act II. sc. ii. Norfolk speaking of Wolsey, says, "I'll venture one *have* at him." This being misunderstood, is changed in the second copy to—"I'll venture one *beave* at him."

Julius Cæsar likewise furnishes various specimens of his ignorance of Shakspeare's language. The phrase, to *bear hard*, not being understood, instead of—

"Caius Ligarius doth *bear* Cæsar *hard*." First Folio.

we find in the second copy,

"Caius Ligarius doth bear Cæsar *hatred*."

and from the same cause the words *dank*, *blest*, and *burtled*, are dismissed from the text, and more familiar words substituted in their room.⁵

In like manner in the third act of *Coriolanus*, sc. ii. the ancient verb to *owe*, i. e. to possess, is discarded by this editor, and *own* substituted in its place.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, we find in the original copy these lines:

"——— I say again, thy spirit
"Is all afraid to govern thee near him,
"But he *away*, 'tis noble."

Instead of restoring the true word *away*, which

5 "To walk unbraced, and suck up the humours
"Of the *dank* morning." First Folio.
"Of the *dark* morning." Second Folio.
"We are *blest* that Rome is rid of him." First Folio.
"We are *glad* that Rome is rid of him." Second Folio.
"The noise of battle *burtled* in the air." First Folio.
"The noise of battle *hurried* in the air." Second Folio.

was thus corruptly exhibited, the editor of the second folio, without any regard to the context, altered another part of the line, and absurdly printed—"But he *alway* is noble."

In the same play, Act I. sc. iii. Cleopatra says to Charmian—"Quick and return;" for which the editor of the second folio, not knowing that *quick* was either used adverbially, or elliptically for *Be quick*, substitutes—"Quickly, and return."

In *Timon of Athens*, are these lines:

"And that unaptness made your minister

"Thus to excuse yourself."

i. e. and made that unaptness your minister to excuse yourself; or, in other words, availed yourself of that unaptness as an excuse for your own conduct. The words being inverted and put out of their natural order, the editor of the second folio supposed that *unaptness*, being placed first, must be the nominative case, and therefore reads—

"And that unaptness made *you* minister,

"Thus to excuse yourself."

In that play, from the same ignorance, instead of Timon's exhortation to the thieves, to kill as well as rob—"Take wealth and *lives* together," we find in the second copy, "Take wealth, and *live* together." And with equal ignorance and licentiousness this editor altered the epitaph on Timon, to render it what he thought metrical, by leaving out various words. In the original edition it appears as it does in Plutarch, and therefore we may be certain that the variations in the second copy were here, as in other places, all arbitrary and capricious.

Again, in the same play, we have—

"I defil'd land."

and—

“ O, my good lord, the world is but a *word*,” &c.

The editor not understanding either of these passages, and supposing that *I* in the first of them was used as a personal pronoun, (whereas it stands according to the usage of that time for the affirmative particle, *ay*,) reads in the first line,

“ *I defy land* ;”

and exhibits the other line thus :

“ O, my good lord, the world is but a *world*,” &c.

Our author and the contemporary writers generally write *wars*, not *war*, &c. The editor of the second folio being unapprised of this, reads in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III. sc. v. “ Cæsar having made use of him in the *war* against Pompey,”—instead of *wars*, the reading of the original copy.

The seventh scene of the fourth act of this play concludes with these words: “ Despatch.—Enobarbus !” Antony, who is the speaker, desires his attendant *Eros* to despatch, and then pronounces the name *Enobarbus*, who had recently deserted him, and whose loss he here laments. But there being no person on the scene but *Eros*, and the point being inadvertently omitted after the word *dispatch*, the editor of the second folio supposed that *Enobarbus* must have been an error of the press, and therefore reads :

“ Dispatch, *Eros*.”

In *Troilus and Cressida*, Cressida says,

“ Things won are done ; *joy's soul* lies in the doing.”

i. e. the *soul of joy* lies, &c. So, “ *love's visible soul*,” and “ *my soul of counsel* ;” expressions like—

wife used by Shakspeare. Here also the editor of the second folio exhibits equal ignorance of his author; for instead of this eminently beautiful expression, he has given us—

“ Things won are done ; *the soul's joy* lies in doing.”

In *King Richard III.* Ratcliff, addressing the lords at Pomfret, says,

“ Make haste, the hour of death is *expiate*.”

for which the editor of the second folio, alike ignorant of the poet's language and metre, has substituted,

“ Make haste, the hour of death is *now expir'd*.”

So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“ The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she.”

The word *The* being accidentally omitted in the first folio, the editor of the second supplied the defect by reading—

“ Earth hath *up* swallow'd all my hopes but she.

Again, in the same play: “ I'll lay fourteen of my teeth, and yet, to my *teen* be it spoken, I have but four:” not understanding the word *teen*, he substituted *teeth* instead of it.

Again, *ibidem*:

“ Prick'd from the lazy finger of a *maid* —”

Man being corruptly printed instead of *maid* in the first folio, 1623, the editor of the second, who never examined a single quarto copy,⁶ corrected the error at random, by reading—

⁶ That this editor never examined any of the quarto copies, is proved by the following instances:

" Prick'd from the lazy finger of a *woman*."

Again :

" Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say, ay :"

The word *me* being omitted in the first folio, the

In *Troilus and Cressida*, we find in the first folio :

" ——— the remainder viands

" We do not throw in unrespective *same*,

" Because we now are full."

Finding this nonsense, he printed " in unrespective *place*." In the quarto he would have found the true word—*sieve*.

Again, in the same play, the following lines are thus corruptly exhibited :

" That all the Greeks *begin to* worship Ajax ;

" Since things in motion *begin to* catch the eye,

" Than what not stirs."

the words—" *begin to*," being inadvertently repeated in the second line, by the compositor's eye glancing on the line above.

The editor of the second folio, instead of examining the quarto, where he would have found the true reading,

" Since things in motion *sooner* catch the eye,"

thought only of amending the metre, and printed the line thus :

" Since things in motion *'gin to* catch the eye —"

leaving the passage nonsense, as he found it.

So, in *Titus Andronicus* :

" And let no *comfort* delight mine ear —"

being erroneously printed in the first folio, instead of " And let no *comforter*," &c. the editor of the second folio corrected the error according to his fancy, by reading—

" And let no *comfort else* delight mine ear."

So, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Vol. V. p. 267 : " Old Mantuan, who understands thee not, *loves thee not*." The words in the Italick character being inadvertently omitted in the first folio, the editor of the second folio, instead of applying to the quarto to cure the defect, printed the passage just as he found it : and in like manner in the same play implicitly followed the error of the first folio, which has been already mentioned,

" O, that your face were so full of O's —"

though the omission of the word *not*, which is found in the quarto, made the passage nonsense.

So, in *Much Ado about Nothing* :

" And I will break with her. Was't not to this end," &c.

editor of the second capriciously supplied the metre thus:

“Dost thou love? O, I know thou wilt say, ay.”

This expletive, we shall presently find, when I come to speak of our poet's metre, was his constant expedient in all difficulties.

In *Measure for Measure* he printed *ignominy* instead of *ignomy*, the reading of the first folio, and the common language of the time. In the same play, from his ignorance of the constable's humour, he corrected his phraseology, and substituted *instant* for *distant*; (“—at that very *distant* time:”) and in like manner he makes Dogberry in *Much Ado about Nothing*, exhort the watch not to be *vigitant*, but *vigilant*.

Among the marks of love, Rosalind, in *As you like it*, mentions “a beard neglected, which you have not;—but I pardon you for that; for, simply, your *having in* beard is a younger brother's revenue.” Not understanding the meaning of the

being printed instead of—

“And I will break with her *and with her father*,

“*And thou shalt have her*. Was't not to this end,” &c.

the error, which arose from the compositor's eye glancing from one line to the other, was implicitly adopted in the second folio.

Again, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

“*Ab me*, for aught that I could ever read,

“Could ever hear,” &c.

the words *Ab me* being accidentally omitted in the first folio, instead of applying to the quarto for the true reading, he supplied the defect, according to his own fancy, thus:

“*Hermia*, for aught that I could ever read,” &c.

Again, in *The Merchant of Venice* he arbitrarily gives us—

“The ewe bleat for the lamb *when you behold*,”

instead of

“*Why he hath made* the ewe bleat for the lamb.”

See p. 377. Innumerable other instances of the same kind might be produced.

word *having*, this editor reads—"your having *no* beard," &c.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Pyramus says,

"I *see* a voice; now will I to the chink,
"To spy an' I can *hear* my Thisby's face."

Of the humour of this passage he had not the least notion, for he has printed, instead of it,

"I *hear* a voice; now will I to the chink,
"To spy an' I can *see* my Thisby's face."

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I. sc. i. we find in the first folio,

"And out of doubt you do more wrong—"

which the editor of the second perceiving to be imperfect, he corrected at random thus:

"And out of doubt you do *to me* more wrong."

Had he consulted the original quarto, he would have found that the poet wrote—

"And out of doubt you do *me now* more wrong."

So, in the same play,—"*But of mine, then yours,*" being corruptly printed instead of—"But *if mine, then yours,*" this editor arbitrarily reads—"But *first mine, then yours.*"

Again, *ibidem*:

"Or even as well use question with the wolf,

"The ewe bleat for the lamb."

the words "*Why he hath made*" being omitted in the first folio at the beginning of the second line, the second folio editor supplied the defect thus absurdly:

"Or even as well use question with the wolf,

"The ewe bleat for the lamb *when you behold.*"

In *Othello* the word *snipe* being misprinted in the first folio,

“ If I should time expend with such a *snipe*.”

the editor not knowing what to make of it, substituted *swain* instead of the corrupted word.

Again, in the same play,

“ For of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted.”

being printed in the first folio instead of—“ *Forth* of my heart,” &c. which was the common language of the time, the editor of the second folio amended the error according to his fancy, by reading—

“ For off my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted.”

Again, in the same play, Act V. sc. i. not understanding the phraseology of our author's time,

“ Who's there? Whose noise is this, that *cries on* murder?”

he substituted—

“ Whose noise is this, that *cries out* murder?”

and in the first act of the same play, not perceiving the force of an eminently beautiful epithet, for “*defarts idle*,” he has given us “*defarts wild*.”

Again, in that tragedy we find—

“ ——— what charms,
“ What conjuration, and what mighty magick,
“ (For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)
“ I won his daughter.”

that is, I won his daughter *with*; and so the editor of the second folio reads, not knowing that this kind of elliptical expression frequently occurs in

this author's works, as I have shewn in a note on the last scene of *Cymbeline*, and in other places.⁷

In like manner he has corrupted the following passage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

“ So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
 “ Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
 “ Unto his lordship, *whose unwished* yoke
 “ My foul consents not to give sovereignty.”

i. e. to give sovereignty *to*. Here too this editor has unnecessarily tampered with the text, and having contracted the word *unwished*, he exhibited the line thus:

“ Unto his lordship, *to* whose *unwish'd* yoke
 “ My foul consents not to give sovereignty.”

an interpolation which was adopted in the subsequent copies, and which, with all the modern editors, I incautiously suffered to remain in the present edition.⁸

The grave-digger in *Hamlet* observes “ that your tanner will last you nine *year*,” and such is the phraseology which Shakspeare always attributes to his lower characters; but instead of this, in the second folio, we find—“ nine *years*.”

“ Your skill shall, like a star i'the *darkest* night,
 “ Stick fiery off indeed.—”

says Hamlet to Laertes. But the editor of the second folio, conceiving, I suppose, that if a star appeared with extraordinary scintillation, the night must necessarily be luminous, reads—“ i'the *brightest* night:” and, with equal sagacity, not acquiescing in Edgar's notion of “ *four-inch'd*

⁷ See Vol. XIII. p. 235, n. 5; Vol. XI. p. 185, n. 2; and Vol. XV. p. 419, n. 7.

⁸ See Vol. V. p. 10, n. 8.

bridges," this editor has furnished him with a much safer pass, for he reads—"four-arch'd bridges."

In *King Henry VIII.* are these lines:

" ——— If we did think
" His *contemplation* were above the earth —"

Not understanding this phraseology, and supposing that *were* must require a noun in the plural number, he reads:

" ——— If we did think
" His *contemplations* were above the earth," &c.

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act IV. sc. ii.

" With wings more *momentary-swift* than thought."

This compound epithet not being understood, he reads:

" With wings more *momentary, swifter* than thought."

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act I. sc. ii. Hortensio, describing Catharine, says,

" Her only fault (and that is—*faults* enough)
" Is,—that she is intolerable curst;—"

meaning, that this one was a *host of faults*. But this not being comprehended by the editor of the second folio, with a view, doubtless, of rendering the passage more grammatical, he substituted—"and that is *fault* enough."

So, in *King Lear*, we find—"Do you know this noble gentleman?" But this editor supposing, it should seem, that a gentleman could not be noble, or that a noble could not be a gentleman, instead of the original text, reads—"Do you know this *nobleman*?"

In *Measure for Measure*, Act II. sc. i. Escalus,

addressing the Justice, says, "I pray you home to dinner with me:" this familiar diction not being understood, we find in the second folio, "I pray you *go* home to dinner with me." And in *Othello*, not having sagacity enough to see that *apines* was printed by a mere transposition of the letters, for *paines*,

"Though I do hate him, as I do hell *apines*,"

instead of correcting the word, he evaded the difficulty by omitting it, and exhibited the line in an imperfect state.

The Duke of York, in the third part of *King Henry VI.* exclaims,

"That face of his the hungry cannibals

"Would not have touch'd, would not have stain'd with blood."

These lines being thus carelessly arranged in the first folio:

"That face of his

"The hungry cannibals would not have touch'd,

"Would not have stain'd with blood——"

the editor of the second folio, leaving the first line imperfect as he found it, completed the last line by this absurd interpolation:

"Would not have stain'd *the roses just* with blood."

These are but a few of the numerous corruptions and interpolations found in that copy, from the editor's ignorance of Shakspeare's phraseology.

II. Let us now examine how far he was acquainted with the metre of these plays.

In *The Winter's Tale*, Act III. sc. ii. we find—

"What wheels? racks? fires? what flaying? boiling?

"In leads, or oils?"——

Not knowing that *fires* was used as a diffyllable, he added the word *burning* at the end of the line:

“ What wheels? racks? fires? what flaying? boiling?
burning?”

So again, in *Julius Cæsar*, Act III. sc. ii. from the same ignorance, the word *all* has been interpolated by this editor:

“ And with the brands *fire all* the traitors' houses.”

instead of the reading of the original and authentic copy,

“ And with the brands *fire* the traitors' houses.”

Again, in *Macbeth*:

“ I would, while it was smiling in my face,
“ Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
“ And dash'd the brains out, had I so *sworn*
“ As you have done to this.”

Not perceiving that *sworn* was used as a diffyllable, he reads—“ had I *but* so sworn.”

Charms our poet sometimes uses as a word of two syllables. Thus, in *The Tempest*, Act I. sc. ii.

“ Curs'd be I, that did so! All the *charms*,” &c.

instead of which this editor gives us,

“ Curs'd be I, that *I* did so! All the charms,” &c.

Hour is almost always used by Shakspeare as a diffyllable, but of this the editor of the second folio was ignorant; for instead of these lines in *King Richard II.*

“ ——— So sighs, and tears, and groans,
“ Shew minutes, times, and *hours*: but my time
“ Runs posting on,” &c.

he gives us—

“ ——— So sighs, and tears, and groans,
“ Shew minutes, times, and hours : O but my time,”⁹ &c.

So again, in *The Comedy of Errors* :

“ I'll meet you in that place, some *hour, fir*, hence,”

instead of the original reading,

“ I'll meet you in that place some *hour* hence.”

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act I. sc. ii.

“ ——— wishing clocks more swift?
“ Hours, minutes? *the* noon, midnight? and all eyes,” &c.

instead of the original reading,

“ Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? and all eyes,” &c.

Again, in *All's well that ends well*, Act II. sc. iii.

“ Which challenges itself as honours born,
“ And is not like the *fire*. Honours thrive,” &c.

• In *Measure for Measure* we find these lines :

“ ——— Merciful heaven!
“ Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
“ Split't the unwedgeable and gnarled oak,
“ Than the soft mirtle;—But man, proud man,” &c.

There can be no doubt that a word was omitted in the last line; perhaps some epithet to *mirtle*. But the editor of the second folio, resorting to his usual expedient, absurdly reads :

“ Than the soft mirtle. O but man, proud man,—”

So, in *Titus Andronicus*, Act III. sc. ii. *complaynet* being corruptly printed instead of *complayner*,

“ Speechless *complaynet*, I will learn thy thoughts,—”

this editor with equal absurdity, reads :

“ Speechless *complaint*, O, I will learn thy thoughts.”

I have again and again had occasion to mention in the notes on these plays, that *omission* is of all the errors of the press that which most frequently happens. On collating the fourth edition of *King Richard III.* printed in 1612, with the second printed in 1598, I found no less than *twenty-six* words omitted.

This editor, not knowing that *fire* was used as a disyllable, reads :

“ And is not like the fire. Honours *best* thrive,” &c.

So, in *King Henry VI. P. I.*

“ Rescued is Orleans from the *Englisch*.”

Not knowing that *Englisch* was used as a trisyllable, he has completed the line, which he supposed defective, according to his own fancy, and reads :

“ Rescu'd is Orleans from the English *wolves*.”

The same play furnishes us with various other proofs of his ignorance of our poet's metre. Thus, instead of

“ Orleans the bastard, Charles, Burgundy,—”

he has printed (not knowing that *Charles* was used as a word of two syllables,)

“ Orleans the bastard, Charles, *and* Burgundy.”

So, instead of the original reading,

“ Divineſt creature, Aſtræa's daughter,—”

(*Aſtræa* being used as a word of three syllables,) he has printed—

“ Divineſt creature, *bright* Aſtræa's daughter.”

Again, *ibidem* :

“ Whereas the contrary bringeth blifs.”

Not knowing that *contrary* was used as a word of four syllables, he reads :

“ Whereas the contrary bringeth *forth* blifs.”

So *ſure* is used in the same play, as a disyllable :

"Gloster, we'll meet: to thy cost, be *sure*."
but this editor, not aware of this, reads:

"Gloster, we'll meet; to thy *dear* cost, be sure."

Again, in *King Henry VI.* P. II.

"And so to *arms*, victorious father,—"
arms being used as a disyllable. But the second folio reads:

"And so to arms, victorious *noble* father."

Again, in *Twelfth Night*, Act I. sc. i. we find—

"——— when liver, brain, and heart,
"These sovereign thrones, are all supply'd, and fill'd,
"(Her sweet *perfections*,) with one self-king."

for which the editor, not knowing that *perfections* was used as a quadrisyllable, has substituted—

"——— when liver, brain, and heart,
"These sovereign thrones, are all supply'd, and fill'd,
"(Her sweet *perfections*) with one *self-same* king."

Again, in *King Henry VI.* P. II.

"Prove it, *Henry*, and thou shalt be king."

for which the editor of the second folio, not knowing *Henry* to be used as a trisyllable, gives us,

"But prove it, *Henry*, and thou shalt be king."

In like manner *dazzled* is used by Shakspeare as a trisyllable in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act II. sc. iv.

"And that hath *dazzled* my reason's light."

instead of which, we find in the second folio,

"And that hath *dazzled so* my reason's light."

The words *neither*, *rather*, &c. are frequently used by Shakspeare as words of one syllable. So, in *King Henry VI.* P. III.

“ And *neither* by treason, nor hostility,
“ To seek to put me down——”

for which the editor of the second folio has given us,

“ Neither by treason, nor hostility,” &c.

In *Timon of Athens*, Act III. sc. v. Alcibiades asks,

“ Is this the balsam, that the usuring senate
“ Pours into captains' wounds? banishment?”

The editor of the second folio, not knowing that *pours* was used as a disyllable, to complete the supposed defect in the metre, reads:

“ Is this the balsam, that the usuring senate
“ Pours into captains' wounds! *ha!* banishment?”

Tickled is often used by Shakspeare and the contemporary poets, as a word of three syllables. So, in *King Henry VI.* P. II.

“ She's *tickled* now; her fume *needs* no spurs.”

instead of which, in the second folio we have—

“ She's tickled now; her fume *can need* no spurs.”

So, in *Titus Andronicus*, Act II. sc. i.

“ Better than he have *worn* Vulcan's badge.”

This editor, not knowing that *worn* was used as a disyllable, reads:

“ Better than he have *yet worn* Vulcan's badge.”

Again, in *Cymbeline*, Act II. sc. v.

“ All faults that name, nay, that hell knows, why hers,
“ In part, or all; but rather all: for even to vice,” &c.

These lines being thus carelessly distributed in the original copy,—

“ All faults that name, nay, that hell knows,
“ Why hers, in part, or all; but rather all:” &c.

the editor of the second folio, to supply the defect of the first line, arbitrarily reads, with equal ignorance of his author's metre and phraseology,

“ All faults that *may be named*, nay, that hell knows,
“ Why hers,” &c.

In *King Henry IV.* P. II. Act I. sc. iii. is this line:

“ And being now trimm'd in thine own desires,—”

instead of which the editor of the second folio, to remedy a supposed defect in the metre, has given us—

“ And being now trimm'd *up* in thine own desires,—.”

Again, in *As you like it*, Act II. sc. i.

“ ——— he pierceth through
“ The body of city, country, court,—”

instead of which we find in the second folio, (the editor not knowing that *country* was used as a trisyllable,)

“ ——— he pierceth through
“ The body of city, *the* country, court.”

In like manner, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act I. sc. i. he has given us:

“ ——— we knew not
“ The doctrine of ill-doing, *no* nor dream'd
“ That any did:—”

instead of

“ ————— we knew not

“ The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd,” &c.

doctrine being used as a word of three syllables.

“ Pay him fix thousand,” &c. says Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*,

“ Before a friend of this description

“ Should lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.”

the word *hair* being used as a disyllable, or *Bassanio* as a quadrisyllable. Of this the editor of the second folio was wholly ignorant, and therefore reads :

“ Should lose a hair through *my* Bassanio's fault.”

In *The Winter's Tale*, Act IV. sc. iii. Florizel, addressing Perdita, says,

“ ————— my desires

“ Run not before mine honour ; nor my lusts

“ Burn hotter than my faith.”

To complete the last hemistick, Perdita is made to reply,

“ O but, fir,

“ Your resolution cannot hold,”

Here again this editor betrays his ignorance of Shakspeare's metre ; for not knowing that *burn* was used as a disyllable, he reads—

“ O but, *dear* fir,” &c.

Again, in *King Henry VIII.* Act II. sc. iii. the Old Lady declares to Anne Boleyn,

“ 'Tis strange ; a three-pence bow'd would *hire* me,

“ Old as I am, to queen it.”

But instead of this, *hire* not being perceived to be

used as a word of two syllables, we find in the second folio,

“ 'Tis strange; a three-pence bow'd *now* would hire me,” &c.

This editor, indeed, was even ignorant of the author's manner of accenting words, for in *The Tempest*, where we find,

“ ——— Spirits, which by mine art

“ I have from their *confines* call'd to enact

“ My present fancies,—”

he exhibits the second line thus:

“ I have from *all* their *confines* call'd to enact,” &c.

Again, in *King Lear*, Act II. sc. i. instead of—

“ To have the expence and waste of *his* révenues,—”

the latter word, being, I suppose, differently accented after our poet's death, the editor of the second folio has given us,

“ To have the expence and waste of révenues.”

Various other instances of the same kind might be produced; but that I may not weary my readers, I will only add, that no person who wishes to peruse the plays of Shakspeare should ever open the Second Folio, or either of the subsequent copies, in which all these capricious alterations were adopted, with many additional errors and innovations.

It may seem strange, that the person to whom the care of supervising the second folio was consigned, should have been thus ignorant of our poet's language: but it should be remembered, that in the beginning of the reign of Charles the First

many words and modes of speech began to be diffused, which had been common in the age of Queen Elizabeth. The editor of the second folio was probably a young man, perhaps born in the year 1600. That Sir William D'Avenant, who was born in 1605, did not always perfectly understand our author's language, is manifest from various alterations which he has made in some of his pieces. The successive Chronicles of English history, which were compiled between the years 1540 and 1630, afford indubitable proofs of the gradual change in our phraseology during that period. Thus a narrative which Hall exhibits in what now appears to us as very uncouth and ancient diction, is again exhibited by Holinshed, about forty years afterwards, in somewhat a less rude form; and in the chronicles of Speed and Baker in 1611 and 1630, assumes a somewhat more polished air. In the second edition of Gascoigne's Poems printed in 1587, the editor thought it necessary to explain many of the words by placing more familiar terms in the margin, though not much more than twenty years had elapsed from the time of their composition: so rapid were at that time the changes in our language.

My late friend Mr. Tyrwhitt, a man of such candour, accuracy, and profound learning, that his death must be considered as an irreparable loss to literature, was of opinion, that in printing these plays the original spelling should be adhered to, and that we never could be sure of a perfectly faithful edition, unless the first folio copy was made the standard, and actually sent to the press, with such corrections as the editor might think proper. By others it was suggested, that the notes should not be subjoined to the text, but placed at the end of each volume, and that they should be accompanied by a complete Glossary. The former scheme

(that of sending the first folio to the press) appeared to me liable to many objections; and I am confident that if the notes were detached from the text, many readers would remain uninformed, rather than undergo the trouble occasioned by perpetual references from one part of a volume to another.

In the present edition I have endeavoured to obtain all the advantages which would have resulted from Mr. Tyrwhitt's plan, without any of its inconveniences. Having often experienced the fallaciousness of collation by the eye, I determined, after I had adjusted the text in the best manner in my power, to have every proof-sheet of my work read aloud to me, while I perused the first folio, for those plays which first appeared in that edition; and for all those which had been previously printed, the first quarto copy, excepting only in the instances of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *King Henry V.* which, being either sketches or imperfect copies, could not be wholly relied on; and *King Richard III.*² of the earliest edition of which tragedy I was not possessed. I had at the same time before me a table which I had formed of the variations between the quartos and the folio. By this laborious process not a single innovation, made either by the editor of the second folio, or any of the modern editors, could escape me. From the Index to all the words and phrases explained or illustrated in the notes, which I have subjoined

² At the time the tragedy of *King Richard III.* was in the press, I was obliged to make use of the *second* edition printed in 1598; but have since been furnished with the edition of 1597, which I have collated *verbatim*, and the most material variations are noticed in the Appendix.

to this work,³ every use may be derived which the most copious Glossary could afford; while those readers who are less intent on philological inquiries, by the notes being appended to the text, are relieved from the irksome task of seeking information in a different volume from that immediately before them.

If it be asked, what has been the fruit of all this labour, I answer, that many innovations, transpositions, &c. have been detected by this means; many hundred emendations have been made,⁴ and, I trust,

³ If the explication of any word or phrase should appear unsatisfactory, the reader, by turning to the Glossarial Index, may know at once whether any additional information has been obtained on the subject. Thus, in *Macbeth*, Vol. IV. p. 392, Dr. Warburton's erroneous interpretation of the word *blood-bolter'd* is inserted; but the true explication of that provincial term may be found in the APPENDIX. So of the phrase, "*Will you take eggs for money*" in *The Winter's Tale*; and some others.

⁴ Lest this assertion should be supposed to be made without evidence, I subjoin a list of the restorations made from the original copy, and supported by contemporary usage, in two plays only; *The Winter's Tale* and *King John*. The lines in the Italic character are exhibited as they appear in the edition of 1778, (as being much more correctly printed than that of 1785,) those in the common character as they appear in the present edition.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

1. " ——— *I'll give you my commission,*
 "*To let him there a month.*" P. 293.
 " ——— *I'll give him my commission,*
 "*To let him there a month.*" P. 125.
2. ——— *we know not*
 "*The doctrine of ill-doing, no, nor dream'd—*" P. 295.
 " ——— *we know not*
 "*The doctrine of ill-doing; nor dream'd—*" P. 126.
3. "*As o'er-dy'd blacks, as winds, as waters;—*" P. 300.
 "*As o'er-dy'd blacks, as wind, as waters;—*" P. 130.
4. "*As ornament oft does.*" P. 302.
 "*As ornaments oft do.*" P. 130.

a genuine text has been formed. Wherever any deviation is made from the authentick copies,

The original copy, with a disregard of grammar, reads—
 “As ornaments oft does.” This inaccuracy has been constantly corrected by every editor wherever it occurs; but the correction should always be made in the verb, and not in the noun.

5. “Have you not—thought (for cogitation
 “Resides not in the man that does not think it)
 “My wife is slippery?” P. 408.
 “Have you not—thought (for cogitation
 “Resides not in the man that does not think)
 “My wife is slippery?” P. 138.
6. “——wishing clocks more swift?
 “Hours, minutes? the noon midnight? and all eyes,—”
 P. 408.
 “——wishing clocks more swift?
 “Hours, minutes? noon midnight? and all eyes,—”
 P. 139.
7. “——Ay, and thou,—who may’st see
 “How I am gall’d—thou might’st be-spice a cup,—” P. 309.
 “——Ay, and thou,—who may’st see
 “How I am galled,—might’st be-spice a cup,—” P. 140.
8. “——I’ll keep my stable where
 “I lodge my wife;—” P. 325.
 “——I’ll keep my stables where
 “I lodge my wife;—” P. 153.
9. “Relish as truth like us.” P. 317.
 “Relish a truth like us.” P. 156.
10. “And I beseech you, hear me, who profess—” P. 333.
 “And I beseech you hear me, who professes—” P. 162.
11. “This session to our great grief,—” P. 343.
 “This sessions to our great grief,—” P. 170.
12. “The bug which you will fright me with, I seek.” P. 347.
 “The bug which you would fright me with, I seek.”
 P. 175.
13. “You here shall swear upon the sword of justice,—” P. 349.
 “You here shall swear upon this sword of justice,—”
 P. 177.
14. “The session shall proceed.” P. 349.
 “The sessions shall proceed.” P. 178.

except in the case of mere obvious errors of the

15. "Which you knew great; and to the certain hazard
 "Of all incertainties—" P. 350.
 "Which you knew great, and to the hazard
 "Of all incertainties—" P. 179.

Some word was undoubtedly omitted at the press; (probably *fearful* or *doubtful*;) but I thought it better to exhibit the line in an imperfect state, than to adopt the interpolation made by the editor of the second folio, who has introduced perhaps as unfit a word as could have been chosen.

16. "Through my dark rust! and how his piety—" P. 360.
 "Thorough my rust! and how his piety—" P. 179.

The first word of the line is in the old copy by the mistake of the compositor printed *Through*.

17. "O but dear fir,——" P. 375.
 "O but, fir,——" P. 200.
18. "Your discontenting father I'll strive to qualify,——" P. 401.
 "Your discontenting father strive to qualify,——" P. 224.
19. "If I thought it were not a piece of honesty to acquaint the
 king withal, I would do it." P. 407.
 "If I thought it were a piece of honesty to acquaint the
 king withal, I'd not do it." P. 229.
20. "Dost thou think, for that I insinuate or toze—" P. 402.
 "Dost thou think, for that I insinuate and toze—" P. 231.
21. "You might have spoke a thousand things,——" P. 414.
 "You might have spoken a thousand things,——" P. 235.
22. "Where we offend her now, appear—" P. 417.
 "Where we offenders now appear—" P. 237.
23. "Once more to look on.
 "Sir, by his command,——" P. 420.
 "Once more to look on him.
 "By his command,——" P. 240.
24. "—— like a weather-beaten conduit." P. 425.
 "—— like a weather-bitten conduit." P. 246.
25. "——— This your son-in-law,
 "And son unto the king, who, heavens directing,
 "Is troth-plight to your daughter." P. 437.
 "——— This your son-in-law,
 "And son unto the king, (whom heavens directing,)
 "Is troth-plight to your daughter." P. 257.

press,⁵ the reader is apprized by a note; and every

KING JOHN.

1. "Which fault lies on the hazard of all husbands. P. 10.
"Which fault lies on the hazards of all husbands." P. 451.
2. "'Tis too respective, and too sociable.
"For your conversing." P. 14.
" 'Tis too respective, and too sociable,
"For your conversion." P. 456.

⁵ That I may be accurately understood, I subjoin a few of these unnoticed corrections:

In *King Henry VI.* P. I. Act I. sc. vi.

"Thy promises are like Adonis' gardens,

"That one day bloom'd, and fruitful were the next."

The old copy reads—*garden.*

In *King John*, Act IV. sc. ii.

"——— that close aspect of his

"Does shew the mood of a much-troubled breast."

The old copy reads—*Do.*

Ibidem, Act I. sc. i.

" 'Tis too respective, and too sociable," &c.

The old copy,—"'Tis *two* respective," &c.

Again, in the same play, we find in the original copy,

"Against the *inuoluerable* clouds of heaven."

In *King Henry V.* Act V. sc. ii.

"Corrupting in *its* own fertility."

The old copy reads—*it.*

In *Timon of Athens*, Act I. sc. i.

"Come, shall we in?"

The old copy has—*Comes.*

Ibidem: "Even on their knees, and *hands*,—"

The old copy has—*hand.*

In *Cymbeline*, Act III. sc. iv.

"The handmaids of all women, or, more truly,

"Woman *its* pretty self."

The old copy has—*it.*

It cannot be expected that the page should be encumbered with the notice of such obvious mistakes of the press as are here enumerated. With the exception of errors such as these, whenever any emendation has been adopted, it is mentioned in a note, and ascribed to its author.

emendation that has been adopted, is ascribed to its proper author. When it is considered that

3. " *Thus leaning on my elbow,—*" P. 16.
" *Thus leaning on mine elbow,—*" P. 457.
4. " *With them a bastard of the king deceas'd.*" P. 25.
" *With them a bastard of the king's deceas'd.*" P. 464.
5. " *That thou hast under-wrought its lawful king.*" P. 26.
" *That thou hast under-wrought his lawful king.*" P. 465.
6. " *Say, shall the current of our right run on ?*" P. 37.
" *Say, shall the current of our right roam on ?*" P. 476.
7. " *And now he feasts, mouthing the flesh of men,—*" P. 38.
" *And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,—*" P. 477.
8. " *A greater power than ye—*" P. 39.
" *A greater power than we—*" P. 478.
9. " *For grief is proud, and makes his owner stoop.*" P. 52.
" *For grief is proud, and makes his owner stout.*" P. 492.
10. " *O, that a man would speak these words to me !*" P. 52.
" *O, that a man should speak these words to me !*" P. 497.
11. " *Is't not amiss, when it is truly done ?*" P. 64.
" *Is not amiss, when it is truly done.*" P. 504.
12. " *Then, in despite of broad-ey'd watchful day,—*" P. 72.
" *Then, in despite of brooded watchful day,—*" P. 512.
13. " *A whole armado of collected sail.*" P. 74.
" *A whole armado of convicted sail.*" P. 514.
14. " *And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's taste.*"
P. 79.
" *And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet word's taste.*"
P. 519.
15. " *Strong reasons make strong actions.*" P. 81.
" *Strong reasons make strange actions.*" P. 522.
16. " *Must make a stand at what your highness will.*" P. 89.
" *Doth make a stand at what your highness will.*"
P. 530.
17. " *Had none, my lord ! why, did not you provoke me ?*"
P. 96.
" *Had none, my lord ! why, did you not provoke me ?*"
P. 536.
18. " *Mad'st it no conscience to destroy a king.*" P. 97.
" *Made it no conscience to destroy a king.*" P. 537.
19. " *Sir, fir, impatience has its privilege.*" P. 102.
" *Sir, fir, impatience has his privilege.*" P. 541.

there are one hundred thousand lines in these plays, and that it often was necessary to consult six or seven volumes, in order to ascertain by

20. "*Or, when he doom'd this beauty to the grave,—*" P. 102.
 "*Or, when he doom'd this beauty to a grave,—*" P. 541.
 21. "*To the yet-unbegotten sins of time.*" P. 102.
 "*To the yet-unbegotten sin of times.*" P. 541.
 22. "*And breathing to this breathless excellence,—*" P. 102.
 "*And breathing to his breathless excellence,—*" P. 542.
 23. "*And your supplies, which you have wish'd so long,—*" P. 121.
 "*And your supply, which you have wish'd so long,—*" P. 561.
 24. "*What's that to thee? Why may I not demand—*" P. 122.
 "*What's that to thee? Why may not I demand—*" P. 562.
 25. "*O, my sweet sir, news fitted to the night.*" P. 123.
 "*O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night.*" P. 563.
 26. "*Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,*
Leaves them; invisible his siege is now
Against the mind,—" P. 124.
 "*Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,*
Leaves them invisible; and his siege is now
Against the mind,—" P. 565.
 27. "*The salt of them is hot.*" P. 125.
 "*The salt in them is hot.*" P. 568.

Two other restorations in this play I have not set down:

"Before we will lay down our just-borne arms—" Act II. sc. iii.
 and

"Be these sad signs confirmers of thy word." Act III. sc. i.

because I pointed them out on a former occasion.

It may perhaps be urged that some of the variations in these lists, are of no great consequence; but to preserve our poet's genuine text is certainly important; for otherwise, as Dr. Johnson has justly observed, "the history of our language will be lost;" and as our poet's words are changed, we are constantly in danger of losing his meaning also. Every reader must wish to peruse what Shakspeare wrote, supported at once by the authority of the authentick copies, and the usage of his contemporaries, rather than what the editor of the second folio, or Pope, or Hanmer, or Warburton, have arbitrarily substituted in its place.

which of the preceding editors, from the time of the publication of the second folio, each emendation was made, it will easily be believed, that this was not effected without much trouble.

Whenever I mention *the old copy* in my notes, if the play be one originally printed in quarto, I mean the first quarto copy; if the play appeared originally in folio, I mean the first folio; and when I mention the old copies, I mean the first quarto and first folio, which, when that expression is used, it may be concluded, concur in the same reading. In like manner, *the folio* always means the first folio, and *the quarto*, the earliest quarto, with the exceptions already mentioned. In general, however, the date of each quarto is given, when it is cited. Where there are two quarto copies printed in the same year, they are particularly distinguished, and the variations noticed.

The two great duties of an editor are, to exhibit the genuine text of his author, and to explain his obscurities. Both of these objects have been so constantly before my eyes, that, I am confident, one of them will not be found to have been neglected for the other. I can with perfect truth say, with Dr. Johnson, that "not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate." I have examined the notes of all the editors, and my own former remarks, with equal rigour; and have endeavoured as much as possible to avoid all contro-

Let me not, however, be misunderstood. *All* these variations have not been discovered by the present collation, some of them having been pointed out by preceding editors; but such as had been already noticed were merely pointed out: the original readings are now established and supported by the usage of our poet himself and that of his contemporaries, and restored to the text, instead of being degraded to the bottom of the page.

verſy, having conſtantly had in view a philanthropick obſervation made by the editor above mentioned: “ I know not (ſays that excellent writer,) why our editors ſhould, with ſuch implacable anger, perſecute their predeceſſors. Οἱ νεκροὶ μὴ δάκνυσιν, the dead, it is true, can make no reſiſtance, they may be attacked with great ſecurity; but ſince they can neither feel nor mend, the ſafety of mauling them ſeems greater than the pleaſure: nor perhaps would it much miſbeſeem us to remember, amidſt our triumphs over the *nonsenſical* and the *ſenſeleſs*, that we likewiſe are men; that *debemur morti*, and, as Swift obſerved to Burnet, ſhall ſoon be among the dead ourſelves.”

I have in general given the true explication of a paſſage, by whomſoever made, without loading the page with the preceding unſucceſſful attempts at elucidation, and by this means have obtained room for much additional illuſtration: for, as on the one hand, I truſt very few ſuperfluous or unneceſſary annotations have been admitted, ſo on the other, I believe, that not a ſingle valuable explication of any obſcure paſſage in theſe plays has ever appeared, which will not be found in the following volumes.

The admirers of this poet will, I truſt, not merely pardon the great acceſſion of new notes in the preſent edition, but examine them with ſome degree of pleaſure. An idle notion has been propagated, that Shakspeare has been *buried under his commentators*; and it has again and again been repeated by the taſtleſs and the dull, “ that notes, though often neceſſary, are *neceſſary evils*.” There is no perſon, I believe, who has an higher reſpect for the authority of Dr. Johnson than I have; but he has been miſunderſtood, or miſrepreſented, as if theſe words contained a general caution to *all* the

readers of this poet. Dr. Johnson, in the part of his preface here alluded to, is addressing the *young* reader, to whom Shakspeare is *new*; and him he very judiciously counsels to "read every play from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators.—Let him read on, through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue, and his interest in the fable." But to much the greater and more enlightened part of his readers, (for how few are there comparatively to whom Shakspeare is new?) he gives a very different advice: Let them to whom the pleasures of novelty have ceased, "attempt exactness, and read the commentators."

During the era of conjectural criticism and capricious innovation, notes were indeed evils; while one page was covered with ingenious sophistry in support of some idle conjecture, and another was wasted in its overthrow, or in erecting a new fabrick equally unsubstantial as the former. But this era is now happily past away; and conjecture and emendation have given place to rational explanation. We shall never, I hope, again be told, that "as the best gueffer was the best diviner, so he may be said in some measure to be the best editor of Shakspeare."⁶ Let me not, however, be supposed an enemy to all conjectural emendation; sometimes undoubtedly we must have recourse to it; but, like the machinery of the ancient drama, let it not be resorted to except in cases of difficulty; *nisi dignus vindice nodus*. "I wish (says Dr. Johnson,) we all conjectured less, and explained more." When our poet's entire library shall have been discovered, and the fables of all his plays traced to

⁶ Newton's Preface to his edition of Milton.

their original source, when every temporary allusion shall have been pointed out, and every obscurity elucidated, then, and not till then, let the accumulation of notes be complained of. I scarcely remember ever to have looked into a book of the age of Queen Elizabeth, in which I did not find somewhat that tended to throw a light on these plays. While our object is, to support and establish what the poet wrote, to illustrate his phraseology by comparing it with that of his contemporaries, and to explain his fugitive allusions to customs long since disused and forgotten, while this object is kept steadily in view, if even every line of his plays were accompanied with a comment, every intelligent reader would be indebted to the industry of him who produced it. Such uniformly has been the object of the notes now presented to the publick. Let us then hear no more of this barbarous jargon concerning Shakspeare's having been *elucidated* into *obscurity*, and buried under the load of his commentators. Dryden is said to have regretted the success of his own instructions, and to have lamented that at length, in consequence of his critical prefaces, the town had become too skilful to be easily satisfied. The same observation may be made with respect to many of these objectors, to whom the meaning of some of our poet's most difficult passages is now become so familiar, that they fancy they originally understood them "without a prompter;" and with great gravity exclaim against the unnecessary illustrations furnished by his Editors: nor ought we much to wonder at this; for our poet himself has told us,

" ——— 'tis a common proof,

" That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,

VOL. I.

D d

“ Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
“ But when he once attains the upmost round,
“ He then unto the ladder turns his back;
“ Looks in the clouds.”—

I have constantly made it a rule in revising the notes of former editors, to compare such passages as they have cited from any author, with the book from which the extract was taken, if I could procure it; by which some inaccuracies have been rectified. The incorrect extract made by Dr. Warburton from Saviolo's treatise on *Honour and Honourable Quarrels*, to illustrate a passage in *As you like it*, fully proves the propriety of such a collation.

At the end of the tenth volume I have added an Appendix, containing corrections, and supplemental observations, made too late to be annexed to the plays to which they belong. Some object to an Appendix; but, in my opinion, with very little reason. No book can be the worse for such a supplement; since the reader, if such be his caprice, need not examine it. If the objector means, that he wishes that all the information contained in an Appendix, were properly disposed in the preceding volumes, it must be acknowledged that such an arrangement would be extremely desirable: but as well might he require from the elephant the sprightliness and agility of the squirrel, or from the squirrel the wisdom and strength of the elephant, as expect, that an editor's latest thoughts, suggested by discursive reading while the sheets that compose his volumes were passing through the press, should form a part of his original work; that information acquired too late to be employed in its proper place, should yet be found there.

That the very few stage-directions which the old copies exhibit, were not taken from our author's

manuscripts, but furnished by the players, is proved by one in *Macbeth*, Act IV. sc. i. where "*A show of eight kings*" is directed, "*and Banquo last, with a glass in his hand;*" though from the very words which the poet has written for *Macbeth*, it is manifest that the glass ought to be borne by the eighth king, and not by Banquo. All the stage-directions therefore throughout this work I have considered as wholly in my power, and have regulated them in the best manner I could. The reader will also, I think, be pleased to find the place in which every scene is supposed to pass, precisely ascertained: a species of information, for which, though it often throws light on the dialogue, we look in vain in the ancient copies, and which has been too much neglected by the modern editors.

The play of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, which is now once more restored to our author, I originally intended to have subjoined, with *Titus Andronicus*, to the tenth volume; but, to preserve an equality of size in my volumes, have been obliged to give it a different place. The hand of Shakspeare being indubitably found in that piece, it will, I doubt not, be considered as a valuable accession; and it is of little consequence where it appears.

It has long been thought that *Titus Andronicus* was not written originally by Shakspeare; about seventy years after his death, Ravenscroft having mentioned that he had been "told by some anciently conversant with the stage, that our poet only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters." The very curious papers lately discovered in Dulwich College, from which large extracts are given at the end of the *History of the Stage*, prove, what I long since suspected, that this play, and *The First Part of King*

Henry VI. were in possession of the scene when Shakspeare began to write for the stage; and the same manuscripts shew, that it was then very common for a dramattick poet to alter and amend the work of a preceding writer. The question therefore is now decisively settled; and undoubtedly some additions were made to both these pieces by Shakspeare. It is observable that the second scene of the third act of *Titus Andronicus* is not found in the quarto copy printed in 1611. It is therefore highly probable that this scene was added by our author; and his hand may be traced in the preceding act, as well as in a few other places.⁷ The additions which he made to *Pericles* are much more numerous, and therefore more strongly entitle it to a place among the dramattick pieces which he has adorned by his pen.

With respect to the other contested plays, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *The London Prodigal*, &c. which have now for near two centuries been falsely ascribed to our author, the manuscripts above mentioned completely clear him from that imputation; and prove, that while his great modesty made him set but little value on his own inimitable productions, he could patiently endure to have the miserable trash of other writers publicly imputed to him, without taking any measure to vindicate his fame. *Sir John Oldcastle*, we find from indubitable evidence, though ascribed in the title-page to "William Shakspeare," and printed in the year 1600, when his fame was in its meridian, was the joint-production of four other poets; Michael

⁷ If ever the account-book of Mr. Heminge shall be discovered, we shall probably find in it—"Paid to William Shakspeare for mending *Titus Andronicus*." See Vol. II. p. 482.

Drayton, Anthony Mundy, Richard Hathwaye, and Robert Wilfon.⁸

In the Dissertation annexed to the three parts of *King Henry the Sixth*, I have discussed at large the question concerning their authenticity; and have assigned my reasons for thinking that the second and third of those plays were formed by Shakspeare on two elder dramas now extant. Any disquisition therefore concerning these controverted pieces is here unnecessary.

Some years ago I published a short Essay on the economy and usages of our old theatres. The Historical Account of the English Stage, which has been formed on that essay, has swelled to such a size, in consequence of various researches since made, and a great accession of very valuable materials, that it is become almost a new work. Of these the most important are the curious papers which have been discovered at Dulwich, and the very valuable Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King James and King Charles the First, which have contributed to throw much light on our dramattick history, and furnished some singular anecdotes of the poets of those times.

Twelve years have elapsed since the Essay on the order of time in which the plays of Shakspeare were written, first appeared. A re-examination of these plays since that time has furnished me with several particulars in confirmation of what I had formerly suggested on this subject. On a careful revival of that Essay, which, I hope, is improved as well as considerably enlarged, I had the satisfaction of observing that I had found reason to

⁸ Vol. II. *Additions*, p. 480.

attribute but two plays to an era widely distant from that to which they had been originally ascribed; and to make only a minute change in the arrangement of a few others. Some information, however, which has been obtained since that Essay was printed in its present form, inclines me to think that one of the two plays which I allude to, *The Winter's Tale*, was a still later production than I have supposed; for I have now good reason to believe that it was first exhibited in the year 1613;⁹ and that consequently it must have been one of our poet's latest works.

Though above a century and a half has elapsed since the death of Shakspeare, it is somewhat extraordinary, (as I observed on a former occasion,) that none of his various editors should have attempted to separate his genuine poetical compositions from the spurious performances with which they have been long intermixed; or have taken the trouble to compare them with the earliest and most authentick copies. Shortly after his death a very incorrect impression of his poems was issued out, which in every subsequent edition, previous to the year 1780, was implicitly followed. They have been carefully revised, and with many additional illustrations are now a second time faithfully printed from the original copies, excepting only *Venus and Adonis*, of which I have not been able to procure the first impression. The second edition, printed in 1596, was obligingly transmitted to me by the late Reverend Thomas Warton, of whose friendly and valuable correspondence I was deprived by death, when these volumes were almost ready to be issued

⁹ See *Emendations and Additions*, Vol. I. Part II. p. 286. [i. e. Mr. Malone's edition.]

The paragraph alluded to, in the present edition, will stand in its proper place. STEEVENS.

from the press. It is painful to recollect how many of (I had almost said) my coadjutors have died since the present work was begun:—the elegant scholar, and ingenious writer, whom I have just mentioned; Dr. Johnson, and Mr. Tyrwhitt: men, from whose approbation of my labours I had promised myself much pleasure, and whose stamp could give a value and currency to any work.

With the materials which I have been so fortunate as to obtain, relative to our poet, his kindred, and friends, it would not have been difficult to have formed a new Life of Shakspeare, less meagre and imperfect than that left us by Mr. Rowe: but the information which I have procured having been obtained at very different times, it is necessarily dispersed, partly in the copious notes subjoined to Rowe's Life, and partly in the Historical Account of our old actors. At some future time I hope to weave the whole into one uniform and connected narrative.

My inquiries having been carried on almost to the very moment of publication, some circumstances relative to our poet were obtained too late to be introduced into any part of the present work. Of these due use will be made hereafter.

The prefaces of Theobald, Hanmer, and Warburton, I have not retained, because they appeared to me to throw no light on our author or his works: the room which they would have taken up, will, I trust, be found occupied by more valuable matter.

As some of the preceding editors have justly been condemned for innovation, so perhaps (for of objections there is no end,) I may be censured for too strict an adherence to the ancient copies. I have constantly had in view the Roman sentiment

adopted by Dr. Johnson, that "it is more honourable to save a citizen than to destroy an enemy," and, like him, "have been more careful to protect than to attack." "I do not wish the reader to forget, (says the same writer,) that the most commodious (and he might have added, the most forcible and elegant,) is not always the true reading."² On this principle I have uniformly proceeded, having resolved never to deviate from the authentick copies, merely because the phraseology was harsh or uncommon. Many passages, which have heretofore been considered as corrupt, and are now supported by the usage of contemporary writers, fully prove the propriety of this caution.³

The rage for innovation till within these last thirty years was so great, that many words were dismissed from our poet's text, which in his time were current in every mouth. In all the editions

² *King Henry IV.* Part II.

³ See particularly *The Merchant of Venice*, Vol. V. p. 456:

"——— That many may be meant

"By the fool multitude."

with the note there.

We undoubtedly should not now write—

"But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,—"

yet we find this phrase in *The Comedy of Errors*, Vol. VII. p. 266.

See also *The Winter's Tale*, Vol. VII. p. 204:

"——— This your son-in-law,

"And son unto the king, (*whom* heavens directing,)

"Is troth-plight to your daughter."

Measure for Measure, Vol. IV. p. 333: "— to be so bared,—"

Coriolanus, Vol. XII. p. 140, n. 8:

"Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart," &c.

Hamlet, Vol. XV. p. 37:

"That he might not *beteem* the winds of heaven," &c.

As you like it, Vol. VI. p. 54, n. 5:

"My voice is ragged,—"

Cymbeline, Vol. XIII. p. 235, n. 5:

"Whom heavens, in justice, (both on her and hers,)

"Have laid most heavy hand."

since that of Mr. Rowe, in the Second Part of *King Henry IV.* the word *channel*⁴ has been rejected, and *kennel* substituted in its room, though the former term was commonly employed in the same sense in the time of our author; and the learned Bishop of Worcester has strenuously endeavoured to prove that in *Cymbeline* the poet wrote—not *shakes*, but *shuts* or *checks*, “all our buds from growing;”⁵ though the authenticity of the original reading is established beyond all controversy by two other passages of Shakspeare. Very soon, indeed, after his death, this rage for innovation seems to have seized his editors; for in the year 1616 an edition of his *Rape of Lucrece* was published, which was said to be *newly revised and corrected*; but in which, in fact, several arbitrary changes were made, and the ancient diction rejected for one somewhat more modern. Even in the first complete collection of his plays published in 1623, some changes were undoubtedly made from ignorance of his meaning and phraseology. They had, I suppose, been made in the playhouse copies after his retirement from the theatre. Thus in *Othello*, Brabantio is made to call to his domesticks to raise “some special officers of *might*,” instead of “officers of *night*;” and the phrase “*of all loves*,” in the same play, not being understood, “*for love’s sake*” was substituted in its room. So, in *Hamlet*, we have *ere ever* for *or ever*, and *rites* instead of

⁴ Act II. sc. i: “—— throw the quean in the *channel*.” In that passage, as in many others, I have silently restored the original reading, without any observation; but the word in this sense, being now obsolete, should have been illustrated by a note. This defect, however, will be found remedied in *King Henry VI.* P. II. Act II. sc. II:

“As if a *channel* should be call’d a sea.”

⁵ Hurd’s *HOR.* 4th edit. Vol. I. p. 55.

the more ancient word, *crants*. In *King Lear*, Act I. sc. i. the substitution of—"Goes thy heart with this?" instead of—"Goes this with thy heart?" without doubt arose from the same cause. In the plays of which we have no quarto copies, we may be sure that similar innovations were made, though we have now no certain means of detecting them.

After what has been proved concerning the sophistications and corruptions of the Second Folio, we cannot be surprized that when these plays were re-published by Mr. Rowe in the beginning of this century from a later folio, in which the interpolations of the former were all preserved, and many new errors added, almost every page of his work was disfigured by accumulated corruptions. In Mr. Pope's edition our author was not less misrepresented; for though by examining the oldest copies he detected some errors, by his numerous fanciful alterations the poet was so completely modernized, that I am confident, had he "re-visited the glimpses of the moon," he would not have understood his own works. From the quartos indeed a few valuable restorations were made; but all the advantage that was thus obtained, was outweighed by arbitrary changes, transpositions, and interpolations.

The readers of Shakspeare being disgusted with the liberties taken by Mr. Pope, the subsequent edition of Theobald was justly preferred; because he professed to adhere to the ancient copies more strictly than his competitor, and illustrated a few passages by extracts from the writers of our poet's age. That his work should at this day be considered of any value, only shews how long impressions will remain, when they are once made; for Theobald, though not so great an innovator as

Pope, was yet a considerable innovator; and his edition being printed from that of his immediate predecessor, while a few arbitrary changes made by Pope were detected, innumerable sophistications were silently adopted. His knowledge of the contemporary authors was so scanty, that all the illustration of that kind dispersed throughout his volumes, has been exceeded by the researches which have since been made for the purpose of elucidating a single play.

Of Sir Thomas Hanmer it is only necessary to say, that he adopted almost all the innovations of Pope, adding to them whatever caprice dictated.

To him succeeded Dr. Warburton, a critick, who (as hath been said of Salmasius) seems to have erected his throne on a heap of stones, that he might have them at hand to throw at the heads of all those who passed by. His unbounded licence in substituting his own chimerical conceits in the place of the author's genuine text, has been so fully shewn by his revisers, that I suppose no critical reader will ever again open his volumes. An hundred strappadoes, according to an Italian comick writer, would not have induced Petrarch, were he living, to subscribe to the meaning which certain commentators after his death had by their glosses extorted from his works. It is a curious speculation to consider how many thousand would have been requisite for this editor to have inflicted on our great dramatick poet for the same purpose. The defence which has been made for Dr. Warburton on this subject, by some of his friends, is singular. "He well knew," it has been said, "that much the greater part of his notes do not throw any light on the poet of whose works he undertook the revision, and that he frequently imputed to Shakspeare a meaning of which he never

thought; but the editor's great object was to display his own learning, not to illustrate his author, and this end he obtained; for in spite of all the clamour against him, his work added to his reputation as a scholar."—Be it so then; but let none of his admirers ever dare to unite his name with that of Shakspeare; and let us at least be allowed to wonder, that the learned editor should have had so little respect for the greatest poet that has appeared since the days of Homer, as to use a commentary on his works merely as "*a stalking-horse, under the presentation of which he might shoot his wit.*"

At length the task of revising these plays was undertaken by one, whose extraordinary powers of mind, as they rendered him the admiration of his contemporaries, will transmit his name to posterity as the brightest ornament of the eighteenth century; and will transmit it without competition, if we except a great orator, philosopher, and statesman,⁶ now living, whose talents and virtues are an honour to human nature. In 1765 Dr. Johnson's edition, which had long been impatiently expected, was given to the publick. His admirable preface, (perhaps the finest composition in our language,) his happy, and in general just, characters of these plays, his refutation of the false glosses of Theobald and Warburton, and his numerous explications of involved and difficult passages, are too well known, to be here enlarged upon; and therefore I shall only add, that his vigorous and comprehensive understanding threw more light on his author than all his predecessors had done.

In one observation, however, concerning our poet, I do not entirely concur with him, "It is not (he remarks) very grateful to consider how

⁶ The Right Honourable Edmund Burke.

little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him."

He certainly was read, admired, studied, and imitated, at the period mentioned; but surely not in the same degree as at present. The succession of editors has effected this; it has made him understood; it has made him popular; it has shewn every one who is capable of reading, how much superior he is not only to Jonson and Fletcher, whom the bad taste of the last age from the time of the Restoration to the end of the century set above him, but to all the dramatick poets of antiquity:

"——— Jam monte potitus,

"Ridet anhelantem dura ad vestigia turbam."

Every author who pleases must surely please more as he is more understood, and there can be no doubt that Shakspeare is now infinitely better understood than he was in the last century. To say nothing of the people at large, it is clear that Dryden himself, though a great admirer of our poet, and D'Avenant, though he wrote for the stage in the year 1627, did not always understand him.⁷ The very books which are necessary to our

⁷ "The tongue in general is so much refined since Shakspeare's time, that many of his words, and more of his phrases, are *scarce intelligible*." Preface to Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida*. The various changes made by Dryden in particular passages in that play, and by him and D'Avenant in *The Tempest*, prove decisively that they frequently did not understand our poet's language.

In his defence of the Epilogue to *The Conquest of Granada*, Dryden arraigns Ben Jonson for using the personal, instead of the neutral, pronoun, and *unfear'd* for *unafraid*:

author's illustration, were of so little account in their time, that what now we can scarce procure at any price, was then the furniture of the nursery or stall.⁸ In fifty years after our poet's death,

" Though heaven should speak with all *his* wrath at once,

" We should stand upright, and *unfear'd*."

" *His* (says he) is ill syntax with *heaven*, and by *unfear'd* he means *unafraid*; words of a quite contrary signification.—He perpetually uses *ports* for *gates*, which is an affected error in him, to introduce Latin by the loss of the English idiom."

Now *his* for *its*, however ill the syntax may be, was the common language of the time; and to *fear*, in the sense of to *terrify*, is found not only in all the poets, but in every dictionary of that age. With respect to *ports*, Shakspeare who will not be suspected of affecting Latinisms, frequently employs that word in the same sense as Jonson has done, and as probably the whole kingdom did; for the word is still so used in Scotland.

D'Avenant's alteration of *Macbeth*, and *Measure for Measure*, furnish many proofs of the same kind. In *The Law against Lovers*, which he formed on *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Measure for Measure*, are these lines:

" ——— nor do I think,

" The prince has *true* discretion who affects it."

The passage imitated is in *Measure for Measure*:

" Nor do I think the man of *safe* discretion,

" That does affect it."

If our poet's language had been well understood, the epithet *safe* would not have been rejected. See *Othello*:

" My blood begins my *safer* guides to rule;

" And passion, having my best judgment collied," &c.

So also Edgar, in *King Lear*:

" The *safer sense* will ne'er accommodate

" His master thus."

⁸ The price of books at different periods may serve in some measure to ascertain the taste and particular study of the age. At the sale of Dr. Francis Bernard's library in 1698, the following books were sold at the annexed prices:

F O L I O.

Gower de Confessione Amantis. - - - 0 2 6

Now sold for two guineas.

Caxton's Recueyll of the histories of Troy, 1502. 0 3 0

—— Chronicle of England. - - - 0 4 0

Dryden mentions that he was then become "*a little obsolete.*" In the beginning of the present century Lord Shaftesbury complains of his "*rude unpolished stile, and his ANTIQUATED phrase and wit;*" and not long afterwards Gildon informs us that he had been rejected from some modern collections of poetry on account of his *obsolete language*. Whence could these representations have proceeded, but because our poet, not being diligently studied, not being compared with the contemporary writers, was not understood? If he had been "read, admired, studied, and imitated," in the same degree as he is now, the enthusiasm of some one or other of his admirers in the last age would have induced him to make some enquiries concerning the history of his theatrical career, and the anecdotes of his private life. But no such person was found; no anxiety in the publick sought out any particulars concerning him after the Restoration, (if we except the few which were collected by Mr. Aubrey,) though at that time the history of his life must have been

Hall's Chronicle.	-	-	-	-	-	0	6	4
Grafton's Chronicle.	-	-	-	-	-	0	6	10
Holinshed's Chronicle, 1587.	-	-	-	-	-	1	10	6

This book is now frequently sold for ten guineas.

Q U A R T O.

Turberville on hawking and hunting.	-	-	0	0	6
Copley's Wits, Fits, and Fancies.	-	-	0	0	4
Puttenham's Art of English Poesie.	-	-	0	0	4

This book is now usually sold for a guinea.

Powell's History of Wales.	-	-	-	0	1	5
Painter's second tome of the Palace of Pleasure.	-	-	-	0	0	4

The two volumes of Painter's Palace of Pleasure are now usually sold for three guineas.

O C T A V O.

Metamorphosis of Ajax, by Sir John Harrington.	-	-	-	0	0	4
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known to many; for his sister Joan Hart, who must have known much of his early years, did not die till 1646: his favourite daughter, Mrs. Hall, lived till 1649; and his second daughter, Judith, was living at Stratford-upon-Avon in the beginning of the year 1662. His grand-daughter, Lady Barnard, did not die till 1670. Mr. Thomas Combe, to whom Shakspeare bequeathed his sword, survived our poet above forty years, having died at Stratford in 1657. His elder brother William Combe lived till 1667. Sir Richard Bishop, who was born in 1585, lived at Bridgetown near Stratford till 1672; and his son Sir William Bishop, who was born in 1626, died there in 1700. From all these persons without doubt many circumstances relative to Shakspeare might have been obtained; but that was an age as deficient in literary curiosity as in taste.

It is remarkable that in a century after our poet's death, five editions only of his plays were published; which probably consisted of not more than three thousand copies. During the same period three editions of the plays of Fletcher, and four of those of Jonson, had appeared. On the other hand, from the year 1716 to the present time, that is, in seventy-four years, but two editions of the former writer, and one of the latter, have been issued from the press; while above thirty thousand copies of Shakspeare have been dispersed through England.⁹ That nearly as many editions of the

⁹ Notwithstanding our high admiration of Shakspeare, we are yet without a splendid edition of his works, with the illustrations which the united efforts of various commentators have contributed; while in other countries the most brilliant decorations have been lavished on their distinguished poets. The editions of Pope and Hanmer, may, with almost as much propriety, be called *their* works, as those of Shakspeare; and therefore can have no claim to

works of Jonson as of Shakspeare should have been demanded in the last century, will not appear surprising, when we recollect what Dryden has related soon after the Restoration: that "others were then generally preferred before him."² By *others* Jonson

be admitted into any elegant library. Nor will the promised edition, with engravings, undertaken by Mr. Alderman Boydell, remedy this defect, for it is not to be accompanied with notes. At some future, and no very distant, time, I mean to furnish the publick with an elegant edition in quarto, (without engravings,) in which the text of the present edition shall be followed, with the illustrations subjoined in the same page.

² In the year 1642, whether from some capricious vicissitude in the publick taste, or from a general inattention to the drama, we find Shirley complaining that few came to see our author's performances:

" ————— You see

" What audience we have: *what company*

" *To Shakspeare comes?* whose mirth did once beguile

" Dull hours, and buskin'd made even sorrow smile;

" So lovely were the wounds, that men would say

" They could endure the bleeding a whole day;

" *He has but few friends lately.*"

Prologue to *The Sisters*.

" Shakspeare to thee was dull, whose best jest lies

" I'th' lady's questions, and the fool's replies;

" Old fashion'd wit, which walk'd from town to town,

" In trunk-hose, which our fathers call'd the clown;

" Whose wit our nicer times would obsceneness call,

" And which made bawdry pass for comical.

" Nature was all his art; thy vein was free

" As his, but without his scurrility."

Verses on Fletcher, by William Cartwright, 1647.

After the Restoration, on the revival of the theatres, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were esteemed so much superior to those of our author, that we are told by Dryden, "two of their pieces were acted through the year, for one of Shakspeare's." If his testimony needed any corroboration, the following verses would afford it:

" In our old plays, the humour, love, and passion,

" Like doublet, hose, and cloak, are out of fashion;

" That which the world call'd wit in Shakspeare's age,

" Is laugh'd at, as improper for our stage."

Prologue to Shirley's *Love Tricks*, 1667.

and Fletcher were meant. To attempt to shew to the readers of the present day the absurdity of such a preference, would be an insult to their understandings. When we endeavour to trace any thing like a ground for this preposterous taste, we are told of Fletcher's *ease*, and Jonson's *learning*. Of how little use his learning was to him, an ingenious writer of our own time has shewn with that vigour and animation for which he was distinguished. "Jonson, in the serious drama, is as much an imitator, as Shakspeare is an original. He was very learned, as Sampson was very strong, to his own hurt. Blind to the nature of tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himself under it. We see nothing of Jonson, nor indeed of his admired (but also murdered)

" At every shop, while *Shakspeare's* lofty stile
 " Neglected lies, to mice and worms a spoil,
 " Gilt on the back, just smoking from the press,
 " The apprentice shews you D'Urfey's *Hudibras*,
 " Crown's *Mask*, bound up with Settle's choicest labours,
 " And promises some new essay of Babor's."

SATIRE, published in 1680.

" ——— against old as well as new to rage,
 " Is the peculiar frenzy of this age.
 " Shakspeare must down, and you must praise no more,
 " Soft Desdemona, nor the jealous Moor:
 " Shakspeare, whose fruitful genius, happy wit,
 " Was fram'd and finish'd at a lucky hit,
 " The pride of nature, and the shame of schools,
 " Born to create, and not to learn from, rules,
 " Must please no more: his bastards now deride
 " Their father's nakedness they ought to hide."

Prologue by Sir Charles Sedley, to the *Wary Widow*,
 1693.

To the honour of Margaret Duchess of Newcastle be it remembered, that however fantastick in other respects, she had taste enough to be fully sensible of our poet's merit, and was one of the first who after the Restoration published a very high eulogy on him. See her *Sociable Letters*, folio, 1664, p. 244.

ancients; for what shone in the historian is a cloud on the poet, and *Catiline* might have been a good play, if Sallust had never written.

“Who knows whether Shakspeare might not have thought less, if he had read more? Who knows if he might not have laboured under the load of Jonson's learning, as Enceladus under *Ætna*? His mighty genius, indeed, through the most mountainous oppression would have breathed out some of his inextinguishable fire; yet possibly he might not have risen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement and delight. Perhaps he was as learned as his dramatick province required; for whatever other learning he wanted, he was master of two books unknown to many of the profoundly read, though books which the last conflagration alone can destroy; the book of nature, and that of man.”³

To this and the other encomiums on our great poet which will be found in the following pages, I shall not attempt to make any addition. He has justly observed, that

“To guard a title that was rich before,
 “To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
 “To throw a perfume on the violet,
 “To smooth the ice, or add another hue
 “Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
 “To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
 “Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.”

Let me, however, be permitted to remark, that beside all his other transcendent merits, he was the great refiner and polisher of our language. His compound epithets, his bold metaphors, the

³ *Conjectures on Original Composition*, by Dr. Edward Young.

energy of his expressions, the harmony of his numbers, all these render the language of Shakspeare one of his principal beauties. Unfortunately none of his letters, or other prose compositions, not in a dramatick form, have reached posterity; but if any of them ever shall be discovered, they will, I am confident, exhibit the same perspicuity, the same cadence, the same elegance and vigour, which we find in his plays. "Words and phrases," says Dryden, "must of necessity receive a change in succeeding ages; but it is almost a miracle, that much of his language remains so pure; and that he who began dramatick poetry amongst us, untaught by any, and, as Ben Jonson tells us, without learning, should by the force of his own genius perform so much, that in a manner he has left no praise for any who come after him."

In these prefatory observations my principal object was, to ascertain the true state and respective value of the ancient copies, and to mark out the course which has been pursued in the edition now offered to the publick. It only remains, that I should return my very sincere acknowledgments to those gentlemen, to whose good offices I have been indebted in the progress of my work. My thanks are particularly due to Francis Ingram, of Ribbissford in Worcestershire, Esq. for the very valuable Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, and several other curious papers, which formerly belonged to that gentleman; to Penn Asheton Curzon, Esq. for the use of the very rare copy of *King Richard III.* printed in 1597; to the Master, and the Rev. Mr. Smith, librarian, of Dulwich College, for the Manuscripts relative to one of our ancient theatres, which they obligingly transmitted to me; to John Kipling, Esq. keeper of the rolls in Chancery, who in the most liberal manner directed every search to

be made in the Chapel of the Rolls that I should require, with a view to illustrate the history of our poet's life; and to Mr. Richard Clarke, register of the diocese of Worcester, who with equal liberality, at my request, made many searches in his office for the wills of various persons. I am also in a particular manner indebted to the kindness and attention of the Rev. Mr. Davenport, vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon, who most obligingly made every inquiry in that town and the neighbourhood, which I suggested as likely to throw any light on the Life of Shakspeare.

I deliver my book to the world not without anxiety; conscious, however, that I have strenuously endeavoured to render it not unworthy the attention of the publick. If the researches which have been made for the illustration of our poet's works, and for the dissertations which accompany the present edition, shall afford as much entertainment to others, as I have derived from them, I shall consider the time expended on it as well employed. Of the dangerous ground on which I tread, I am fully sensible. "Multa sunt in his studiis (to use the words of a venerable fellow-labourer⁴ in the mines of Antiquity) *cineri supposita doloso*. Errata possint esse multa à memoria. Quis enim in memoriæ thesauro omnia simul sic complectatur, ut pro arbitrato suo possit expromere? Errata possint esse plura ab imperitia. Quis enim tam peritus, ut in cæco hoc antiquitatis mari, cum tempore colluctatus, scopulis non allidatur? Hæc tamen à te, humanissime lector, tua humanitas, mea industria, patriæ charitas, et SHAKSPEARI dignitas, mihi exorent, ut quid mei sit judicii, sine

⁴ Camden.

aliorum præjudicio libere proferam; ut eâdem via qua alii in his studiis solent, insistam; et ut erratis, si ego agnoscam, tu ignoscas." Those who are the warmest admirers of our great poet, and most conversant with his writings, best know the difficulty of such a work, and will be most ready to pardon its defects; remembering, that in all arduous undertakings it is easier to conceive than to accomplish; that "the will is infinite, and the execution confined; that the desire is boundless, and the act a slave to limit." MALONE.

Queen-Anne-Street, East,
October 25, 1790.

EXTRACTS OF ENTRIES

ON THE

Books of the STATIONERS' COMPANY.

A Charter was granted to the Company of Stationers on the 4th of May, 1556, (third and fourth of Philip and Mary,) and was confirmed by Queen Elizabeth in 1560.

The first volume of these Entries has been either lost or destroyed, as the earliest now to be found is

N. B. The terms *book* and *ballad* were anciently used to signify dramattick works, as well as any other forms of composition; while *tragedy* and *comedy* were titles very often bestowed on novels of the serious and the lighter kind. STEEVENS.

lettered B.⁵ The hall was burnt down in the fire of London. The entries begin July 17, 1576.

1562.

[†Receyvd of M. Tottle for his license for pryntinge of the tragicall History of the Romeus and Juliett with Sonnettes. A. fol. 86. a.]⁶

Again, Feb. 18, 1582. Vol. B.
M. Tottell.] Romeo and Julietta.⁷ p. 193
Again, Aug. 5, 1596,—as a *newe ballet*, for Edward White. C. p. 12. b.

April 3, 1592.

Edw. White.] The tragedie of Arden of Feversham and Black Will.⁸ 286

April 18, 1593.

Rich. Field.] A booke entitled Venus and Adonis.⁹ 297 b.

⁵ Since this was written, the first volume, marked A, has been found. MALONE.

⁶ This article, within crotchets, is from Vol. I. which (as Mr. Malone observes) has since been discovered. STEEVENS.

⁷ This and the foregoing are perhaps the original work on which Shakspeare founded his play of Romeo and Juliet. STEEVENS.

⁸ This play was reprinted in 1770 at Feversham, with a preface attributing it to Shakspeare. The collection of parallel passages which the editor has brought forward to justify his supposition, is such as will make the reader smile. The following is a specimen:

Arden of Feversham, p. 74:

“Fling down Endimion, and snatch him up.”

Merchant of Venice, Act V. sc. i:

“Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion.”

Arden of Feversham, p. 87:

“Let my death make amends for all my sin.”

Much Ado about Nothing, Act IV. sc. ii:

“Death is the fairest cover for her shame.” STEEVENS.

⁹ The last stanza of a poem entitled *Mirrha the Mother of Adonis; or Lustes Prodegies*, by William Barksted, 1607, has the following praise of Shakspeare's *Venus and Adonis*:

Afterwards entered by ———
 Harrifon, sen. June 23, 1594: by
 W. Leake, June 23, 1596: by
 W. Barrett, Feb. 16, 1616: and
 by John Parker, March 8, 1619.

Oct. 19, 1593.

Symon Waterfon.] A booke entitled the
 Tragedie of Cleopatra.⁹ 301 b.

Feb. 6, 1593.

John Danter.] A booke entitled a noble
 Roman History of Titus Andro-
 nicus. 304 b.

Entered also unto him by war-
 rant from Mr. Woodcock, the
 ballad thereof.

March 12, 1593.

Tho. Millington.] A booke entituled the
 First Part of the Contention of the
 twoo famous Houses of Yorke and
 Lancaster, with the Deathe of the
 good Duke Humphrie, and the
 Banishment and Deathe of the
 Duke of Yorke, and the tragical

“ But stay, my muse, in thy own confines keepe,
 “ And wage not warre with so deere-lov'd a neighbor;
 “ But, having sung thy day song, rest and sleepe,
 “ Preserve thy small fame and his greater favor.
 “ His song was worthie merit, (Shakspeare hee)
 “ Sung the faire blossome, thou the withered tree:
 “ Laurel is due to him; his art and wit
 “ Hath purchas'd it; cypres thy brow will fit.”

STEEVENS.

⁹ I suppose this to be Daniel's tragedy of *Cleopatra*. Simon
 Waterfon was one of the printers of his other works.

STEEVENS.

Daniel's *Cleopatra* was published by Waterfon in 1594; this entry
 therefore undoubtedly related to it. MALONE.

Ende of the proude Cardinall of
Winchester, with the notable Re-
bellion of Jacke Cade, and the
Duke of Yorke's first Claime unto
the Crown.

305 b.

May 2, 1594.

Peter Shorte.] A pleasaunt conceyted hyf-
torie called the Tayminge of a
Shrowe.²

306 b.

May 9, 1594.

Mr. Harrison Sen.] A booke entitled the
Ravyshment of Lucrece.

306 b.

May 12, 1594.

Tho. Strode.] A booke entitled the famous
Victories of Henry the Fift, con-
taining the honorable Battell of
Agincourt.³

306 b.

May 14, 1594.

Edw. White.] A booke entituled the famous
Chronicle Historie of Leire King
of England and his three Daugh-
ters.⁴

307

² I conceive it to be the play that furnished Shakspeare with the materials which he afterwards worked up into another with the same title. STEEVENS.

³ This might have been the *very displeasing play* mentioned in the epilogue to the second part of *King Henry IV.* STEEVENS.

The earliest edition of this play now known to be extant, was printed in 1598. Of that edition I have a copy. This piece furnished Shakspeare with the outline of the two parts of *K. Henry IV.* as well as with that of *King Henry V.* MALONE.

⁴ I suppose this to be the play on the same subject as that of our author, but written before it. STEEVENS.

May 22, 1594.

Edw. White.] A booke intituled a Winter
Nyghts Pastime.⁵ 307 b.

June 19, 1594.

Tho. Creede.] An enterlude entitled the
Tragedie of Richard the Third,
wherein is shewn the Death of
Edward the Fourthe, with the
Smotheringe of the twoo Princes
in the Tower, with the lament-
able End of Shore's Wife, and
the Contention of the two Houses
of Lancaster and York.⁶ 309 b.

July 20, 1594.

Tho. Creede.] The lamentable Tragedie
of Locrine, the eldest Son of K.
Brutus, discourfinge the Warres
of the Britains, &c. 310 b.
Vol. C.

Before the beginning of this volume are
placed two leaves containing irregular en-
tries, prohibitions, notes, &c. Among these
are the following.

Aug. 4th.

As You like it, a book.

Henry the Fift, a book.⁷Comedy of Much Ado about
Nothing.

} to be staied.

⁵ Query, if the *Winter's Tale*. STEEVENS.

⁶ This could not have been the work of Shakspeare, as the death
of Jane Shore makes no part of his drama. STEEVENS.

⁷ Probably the play before that of Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

Surely this must have been Shakspeare's *Henry V.* which, as well
as *Much Ado about Nothing*, was printed in 1600, when this entry
appears to have been made. See the Essay on the chronological order
of Shakspeare's plays; article, *As you like it*. MALONE.

The dates scattered over these pages are from 1596 to 1615.

Dec. 1, 1595.

Cuthbert Burby.] A booke entituled Edward the Third and the Black Prince, their warres with King John of France.⁸

6

Aug. 5, 1596.

Edw. White.] A new ballad of Romeo and Juliectt.⁹

12 b.

Aug. 15, 1597.

Rich. Jones.] Two ballads, being the first and second parts of the Widowe of Watling-street.²

22 b.

Aug. 29, 1597.

Andrew Wise.] The tragedye of Richard the Seconde.

23

Oct. 20, 1597.

Andrew Wise.] The tragedie of King Richard the Third, with the Deathe of the Duke of Clarence.

25

Feb. 25, 1597.

Andrew Wise.] A booke entituled the Historie of Henry the Fourth, with his Battle at Shrewsbury against

⁸ This is ascribed to Shakspeare by the compilers of ancient catalogues. STEEVENS.

⁹ Query, if Shakspeare's play, the first edition of which appeared in 1597. STEEVENS.

² Perhaps the songs on which the play with the same title was founded. It may, however, be the play itself. It was not uncommon to divide one dramattick piece, though designed for a single exhibition, into two parts. See the *King John* before that of Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

Henry Hottspurre of the North,
with the conceipted Mirth of Sir
John Falstoff. 31

July 22, 1598.

James Roberts.] A booke of the Merchaunt
of Venyse, otherwise called the
Jewe of Venyse. Provided that it
be not prynted by the said James
Roberts or any other whatsoever,
without leave first had from the
ryght honourable the Lord Cham-
berlen. 39 b.

Aug. 4, 1600.

Tho. Pavyer.] First Part of the History of
the Life of Sir John Oldcastle
Lord Cobham.

Item, The Second Part of the
History of Sir John Oldcastle Lord
Cobham, with his Martyrdom. 63

Aug. 14, 1600.

Tho. Pavyer.] The Historye of Henry the
Fifth, with the Battel of Agin-
court, &c. 63

Aug. 23, 1600.

And. Wife, and Wm. Aspley.] Much Ado
about Nothing. 63 b.

Second Part of the History of
King Henry the Fourth, with the
Humours of Sir John Falstaff,
written by Mr. SHAKESPERE. ibid.

Oct. 8, 1600.

Tho. Fisher.] A booke called a Midsomer
Nyghte Dreame. 65 b.

Oct. 28, 1600.

Tho. Heyes.] A booke called the Book of
the Merchaunt of Venyce. 66

Jan. 18, 1601.

John Busby.] An excellent and pleasaunt
conceited comedie of Sir John
Faustoff and the Merry Wyves of
Windfore. 78

Arth. Johnson.] The preceding entered as
assigned to him from John Busby. ibid.

April 19, 1602.

Tho. Pavyer.] A booke called Titus Andro-
nicus. 80 b.

July 26, 1602.

James Roberts.] A booke called the Re-
venge of Hamlett prince of Den-
marke, as it was lately acted by
the Lord Chamberlain his ser-
vants. 84 b.

Aug. 11, 1602.

Wm. Cotton.] A booke called the Lyfe
and Death of the Lord Cromwell,
as yt was lately acted by the Lord
Chamberleyne his servantes. 85 b.

Feb. 7, 1602.

Mr. Roberts.] The booke of Troilus and
Cressida, as it is acted by my Lo.
Chamberlen's men. 91 b.

June 25, 1603.

Matt. Law.] Richard 3.
Richard 2. } all kings.
Henry 4. 1st. Part. } 98

Feb. 12, 1604.

Nath. Butter.] That he get good allowance

for the Enterlude of Henry 8,
before he begin to print it; and
then procure the warden's hand to
it for the entrance of yt, he is to
have the same for his copy.³ 120

May 8, 1605.

Simon Stafford.] A booke called the tragi-
call Historie of King Leir and his
three Daughters, as it was lately
acted. 123

John Wright.] By assignment from Simon
Stafford and consent of Mr. Leake,
the tragical History of King Lear,
&c. provided that Simon Stafford
shall have the printing of this
book.⁴ ibid.

July 3, 1605.

Tho. Pavyer.] A ballad of a lamentable
Murder done in Yorkshire, by a
Gent. upon two of his owne Chil-
dren, fore wounding his Wife and
Nurse,⁵ &c. 126

Jan 22, 1606.

Nich. Ling.] Romeo and Juliett.
Love's Labour Lost.
Taming of a Shrewe. 147

Aug. 6, 1607.

Geo. Elde.] A booke called the Comedie
of the Puritan Widowe. 157 b.

³ This was a play entitled, *When you see me you know me, or the famous chronicle Historie of King Henrie the Eight, &c.* by Samuel Rowley. Printed for N. Butter, 1605. MALONE.

⁴ This is the *King Lear* before that of Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

⁵ Query, if the play. STEEVENS.

Aug. 6, 1607.

Tho. Thorpe.] A comedy called What you Will.⁶

ibid.

Oct. 22, 1607.

Arth. Johnson.] The Merry Devil of Edmonton.⁷

159 b.

Nov. 19, 1607.

John Smythwick.] A booke called Hamlett.
The Taminge of a Shrewe.
Romeo and Julett.
Love's Labour Lost.

161

Nov. 26, 1607.

Nath. Butter and John Busby.] Mr. William Shakespeare, his Hystorie of King Lear, as it was played before the King's Majestie at Whitehall, upon St. Stephen's night at Christmas last, by his Majesties servants playing usuallly at the Globe on the Bank-side.

161 b.

April 5, 1608.

Joseph Hunt and Tho. Archer.] A book called the Life and Death of the Merry Devil of Edmonton, with the pleasant Pranks of Smugg the Smith, Sir John, and mine Hoste

⁶ Perhaps this is Marston's comedy of *What you will*. I have a copy of it dated 1607. *What you will*, however, is the second title to Shakspeare's *Twelfth Night*. STEEVENS.

⁷ This was certainly Marston's play, for it was printed in 1607, by G. Eld, for T. Thorpe. MALONE.

⁷ The *Merry Devil of Edmonton* is mentioned in the *Blacke Booke* by T. M. 1604: "Give him leave to see *The Merry Diuel of Edmunton*, or *A Woman kill'd with Kindnesse*." STEEVENS.

- of the George, about their stealing
of Venison. By T. B.⁸ 165 b.
May 2, 1608.
Mr. Pavyer.] A booke called a Yorkshire
Tragedy, written by Wylliam
Shakespeare. 167
May 2, 1608.
Edw. Blount.] The book of Pericles Prince
of Tyre. 167 b.
A book called Anthony and Cleo-
patra. ibid.
Jan. 28, 1608.
Rich. Bonian and Hen. Whalley.] A booke
called the History of Troylus and
Cressida. 178 b.
May 20, 1609.
Tho. Thorpe.] A booke called Shakespeare's
Sonnets. 183 b
Oct. 16, 1609.
Mr. Welby.] Edward the Third. 189
Dec. 16, 1611.
John Browne.] A booke called the Lyfe
and Death of the Lo. Cromwell,
by W. S. 214 b.
Nov. 29, 1614.
John Beale.] A booke called the Hystorie
of Lord Faulconbridge, bastard
Son to Richard Cordelion.⁹ 256 b.

⁸ Bound up in a volume of plays attributed to Shakspeare, and once belonging to King Charles II. but now in Mr. Garrick's collection. The initial letters at the end of this entry, sufficiently free Shakspeare of the charge from having been its author. STEEVENS.

⁹ Query, if this was Shakspeare's *King John*, or some old romance like that of *Richard Coeur de Lion*. STEEVENS.

It was undoubtedly *The famous Historie of George Lord Fauconbridge*, a prose romance. I have an edition of it now before me printed for I. B. dated 1616. MALONE.

Feb. 16, 1616.
Mr. Barrett.] Life and Death of Lord Cromwell. 279

March 20, 1617.
Mr. Snodham.] Edward the Third, the play. 288

Sept. 17, 1618.
John Wright.] The comedy called Mucedorus.⁹ 293 b.

July 8, 1619.
Nich. Okes.] A play called the Merchaunt of Venice. 303
Vol. D.

Oct. 6, 1621.
Tho. Walkely.] The tragedie of Othello the Moore of Venice. 21

Nov. 8, 1623.
Mr. Blount and Ifaak Jaggard.] Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedyes and Tragedies, foe many of the said Copies as are not formerly entered to other men.

Viz.

Comedyes.	{	The Tempest.
		Two Gentlemen of Verona.
		Measure for Measure.
		The Comedy of Errors.
		As You Like it.
		Alls Well that Ends Well.
		Twelke Night.
		The Winter's Tale.

⁹ Bound up in a volume of plays attributed to Shakspeare, and once belonging to King Charles the Second. See Mr. Garrick's Collection. STEEVENS.

Histories.	{ The Third Part of Henry the Sixt. Henry the Eight.	
	{ Coriolanus. Timon of Athens.	
Tragedies.	{ Julius Cæsar. Macbeth. Anthonie and Cleopatra. Cymbeline.	69

Dec. 14, 1624.

Mr. Pavyer.]	Titus Andronicus. Widow of Watling Street.	93
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Feb. 23, 1625.

Mr. Stanfby.]	Edward the Third, the play.	115
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April 3, 1626.

Mr. Parker.]	Life and Death of Lord Cromwell.	120
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Aug. 4. 1626.

Edw. Brewster.]	Mr. Pavyer's right in	
Rob. Birde.]	Shakespeare's plays, or any of them.	

Sir John Oldcastle, a play.

Titus Andronicus.

Hyftorie of Hamblett.	127
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Jan. 29, 1629.

Mr. Meighen.]	Merry Wives of Windfor.	193
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Nov. 8, 1630.

Ric. Cotes.]	Henrye the Fift. Sir John Oldcastle. Tytus Andronicus. Yorke and Lancafter. Agincourt. Pericles. Hamblett. Yorkshire Tragedy.	208
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The sixteen plays in p. 69, were assigned by
Tho. Blount to Edward Allott, June 26,
1632.

109

Edward Allott was one of the publishers
of the second folio, 1632.

It has hitherto been usual to represent the ancient quartos of our author as by far more incorrect than those of his contemporaries; but, I fear, that this representation has been continued by many of us, with a design to magnify our own services, rather than to exhibit a true state of the question. The reason why we have discovered a greater proportion of errors in the former than in the latter, is because we have sought after them with a greater degree of diligence; for let it be remembered, that it was no more the practice of other writers than of Shakspeare, to correct the press for themselves. Ben Jonson only (who, being versed in the learned languages, had been taught the value of accuracy,) appears to have superintended the publication of his own dramatick pieces; but were those of Lyly, Chapman, Marlow, or the Heywoods, to be revised with equal industry, an editor would meet with as frequent opportunity for the exertion of his critical abilities, as in these quartos which have been so repeatedly censured by those who never took the pains to collate them, or justify the many valuable readings they contain; for when the character of them which we have handed down, was originally given, among typographical blunders, &c. were enumerated all terms and expressions which were not strictly grammatical, or not easily understood. As yet we had employed in our attempts at expla-

nation only such materials as casual reading had supplied; but how much more is requisite for the complete explanation of an early writer, the last edition of the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer may prove a sufficient witness; a work which in respect of accuracy and learning is without a rival, at least in any commentary on an English poet. The reader will forgive me if I desert my subject for a moment, while I express an ardent wish that the same editor may find leisure and inclination to afford us the means of reading the other works of the father of our poetry, with advantages which we cannot derive from the efforts of those who have less deeply and successfully penetrated into the recesses of ancient Italian, French, and English literature. —An author has received the highest mark of distinction, when he has engaged the services of such a commentator.

The reader may perhaps be desirous to know by whom these quartos of Shakspeare are supposed to have been sent into the world. To such a curiosity no very adequate gratification can be afforded; but yet it may be observed, that as these elder copies possess many advantages over those in the subsequent folio, we should decide perversely were we to pronounce them spurious. They were in all probability issued out by some performer, who, deriving no benefit from the theatre except his salary, was uninterested in that retention of copies, which was the chief concern of our ancient managers. We may suppose too that there was nothing criminal in his proceeding; as some of the persons whose names appear before these publications, are known to have filled the highest offices in the company of Stationers with reputation, bequeathing legacies of considerable value to it at their decease. Neither do I discover why the first manuscripts

delivered by so careless a writer to the actors, should prove less correct than those which he happened to leave behind him, unprepared for the press, in the possession of the same fraternity. On the contrary, after his plays had passed for twenty years through the hands of a succession of ignorant transcribers, they were more likely to become maimed and corrupted, than when they were printed from papers less remote from the originals. It is true that Heminge and Condell have called these copies *surreptitious*, but this was probably said with a view to enhance the value of their own impression, as well as to revenge themselves as far as possible on those who had in part anticipated the publication of works from which they expected considerable gleanings of advantage, after their first harvest on the stage was over.—I mean to except from this general character of the quartos, the author's rough draughts of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Romeo and Juliet*; together with the play of *King Henry V.* and the two parts of *King Henry VI.*; for the latter carry all the marks of having been imperfectly taken down by the ear, without any assistance from the originals belonging to the playhouses in which they were first represented.

A succeeding table of those ancient copies of the plays of Shakspeare which his commentators have really met with and consulted, if compared with the earliest of these entries on the books already mentioned, may tempt the reader to suppose that some quartos have not yet been found, from which future assistance may be derived. But I fear that no such resources remain; as it seems to have been the practice of the numerous theatres in the time of Shakspeare, to cause some bookseller to make immediate entries of their new pieces, as a secu-

rity against the encroachments of their rivals, who always considered themselves as justified in the exhibition of such dramas as had been enfranchised by the press. Imperfect copies, but for these precautions, might have been more frequently obtained from the repetition of hungry actors invited for that purpose to a tavern; or something like a play might have been collected by attentive auditors, who made it their business to attend succeeding representations with a like design.² By these means, without any intent of hasty publication, one company of players was studious to prevent the trespasses of another.³ Nor did their policy conclude here; for I have not unfrequently met with registers of both tragedies and comedies, of which the titles were at some other time to be declared. Thus, July 26, 1576, John Hunter enters "A new and pleasant comedie or plaie, after the manner of *Common Condycions*;" and one Fielder, in Sept. 1581, prefers his right to four others, "Whereof he will bring the titles." "The famous Tragedy of the Rich Jewe of Malta," by Christopher Marlow, is ascertained to be the property of Nich. Ling and Tho. Millington, in May, 1594, though it was not printed by Nich. Vavasour till 1633, as Tho. Heywood, who wrote the preface to it, informs us. In this manner the contending theatres were prepared to assert a priority of title to any copies of dramattick performances; and thus were they assisted by our ancient stationers, who strengthened every claim of literary

² See the notes of Mr. Collins and Mr. Malone at the end of the Third Part of *King Henry VI.*

³ From the year 1570 to the year 1629, when the playhouse in White Friars was finished, it appears that no less than seventeen theatres had been built.

property, by entries secured in a manner which was then supposed to be obligatory and legal.

I may add, that the difficulty of procuring licences was another reason why some theatrical publications were retarded and others entirely suppressed. As we cannot now discover the motives which influenced the conduct of former Lord Chamberlains and Bishops, who stopped the sale of several works, which nevertheless have escaped into the world, and appear to be of the most innocent nature, we may be tempted to regard their severity as rather dictated by jealousy and caprice, than by judgement and impartiality. See a note to my *Advertisement*, p. 330.

The publick is now in possession of as accurate an account of the dates, &c. of Shakspeare's works as perhaps will ever be compiled. This was by far the most irksome part of my undertaking, though facilitated as much as possible by the kindness of Mr. Longman, of Pater-noster Row, who readily furnished me with the three earliest volumes of the records of the Stationers' Company, together with accommodations which rendered the perusal of them convenient to me though troublesome to himself. STEEVENS.

A LIST OF SUCH
ANCIENT EDITIONS

O F

SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS,

AS HAVE HITHERTO BEEN MET WITH BY HIS
DIFFERENT EDITORS.

Those marked with Afterisks are in no former
Tables; and those which are printed in the
Italick character I have never seen.

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | { | 1. A Midsummer Night's Dream,
William Shakspeare, 1600, Tho-
mas Fisher. |
| | { | 2. D°. William Shakspeare, 1600,
James Roberts. |
| | { | 1. Merry Wives of Windfor, Wil-
liam Shakspeare, 1602, T. C.
for Arthur Johnson. |
| II. | { | 2. D°. William Shakspeare, 1619,
for D°. |
| | { | 3. D°. William Shakspeare, 1630,
T. H. for R. Meighen. |
| III. | { | Much Ado about Nothing, William
Shakspeare, 1600, V. S. for An-
drew Wise and William Aspley. |

- IV. { 1. Merchant of Venice, William Shakspeare, 1600, J. R. for Thomas Heyes.
 2. W. Shakspeare, 1600, J. Roberts.
 3. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1637, M. P. for Laurence Hayes.
 4. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1652, for William Leake.

- V. { 1. Love's Labour's Lost, William Shakspeare, 1598, W. W. for Cuthbert Burbey.
 2. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1631, W. S. for John Smethwicke.

- VI. { 1. Taming of the Shrew, 1607, V. S. for Nich. Ling.⁴
 2. D^o. Will. Shakspeare, 1631, W. S. for John Smethwicke.

- * VII. { 1. King Lear, William Shakspeare, 1608, for Nathaniel Butter.
 2. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1608, for D^o.
 3. D^o. 1608, for D^o.
 4. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1655, Jane Bell.

- VIII. { 1. King John, 2 Parts, 1591, for Sampson Clarke.
 2. D^o. W. Sh. 1611, Valentine Simmes, for John Helme.
 3. D^o. W. Shakspeare, 1622, Aug. Matthewes, for Thomas Dewe.⁵

⁴ This is the play on which Shakspeare formed his own with the same title.

⁵ These three are only copies of the spurious play.

- IX. { 1. Richard II. 1597, Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wife.
 2. Richard II. William Shakspeare, 1598, Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wife.
 3. D^o. W. Shakspeare, 1608, W. W. for Matthew Law. ‡
 4. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1615, for Matthew Law.
 5. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1634, John Norton.
- * { 1. Henry IV. First Part, 1598, P. S. for Andrew Wife.
 2. D^o. W. Shakspeare, 1599, S. S. for D^o.
 3. D^o. 1604.
 4. D^o. 1608, for Matthew Law. ‡.
 5. D^o. W. Shakspeare, 1613, W. W. for D^o.
- X. { 6. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1622, T. P. sold by D^o.
 7. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1632, John Norton, sold by William Sheares.
 8. D^o. William Shakspeare, 1639, John Norton, sold by Hugh Perry.
- XI. { 1. Henry IV. Second Part, William Shakspeare, 1600, V. S. for Andrew Wise and William Aspley.
 2. D^o. 1600. D^o.
 3. D^o. 1600. D^o.

‡‡ *King Richard II.* and *King Henry IV.* 1608.] Of each of these only one copy has been met with. They both belonged to the late Reverend John Bowle, and are now in my possession.

STEEVENS.

- XII. * { 1. Henry V. 1600. Tho. Creede, for
T. Millington, and John Busby.
2. D°. 1602, Thomas Creede, for
Thomas Pavier.
3. D°. 1608, for T. P.
- XIII. XIV. { 1. Henry VI. William Shakspeare,
1600, Val. Simmes, for Tho.
Millington.
2. D°. William Shakspeare, W. W.
for T. Millington, 1600.
3. D°. William Shakspeare, T. P.
- XV. { 1. *Richard III.* 1597, *Valentine*
Simmes, for Andrew Wise.
2. D°. William Shakspeare, 1598,
Thomas Creede, for D°.
3. D°. William Shakspeare, 1602,
Thomas Creede, for D°.
4. D°. William Shakspeare, 1612,
Thomas Creede, sold by Mat-
thew Lawe.
5. D°. William Shakspeare, 1622,
Thomas Purfoot, sold by D°.
6. D°. William Shakspeare, 1629,
John Norton, sold by D°.
7. D°. William Shakspeare, 1634,
John Norton.
- XVI. { Titus Andronicus, 1611, for Edward
White.
- XVII. { 1. Troilus and Cressida, William
Shakspeare, 1609, G. Eld, for
R. Bonian and H. Whalley, with
a Preface.
2. D°. 1609, for D°.
3. D°. no date, D°. *

- XVIII. * {
1. Romeo and Juliet, 1597, John Danter.
 2. D°. 1599, Tho. Creede, for Cuthbert Burby.
 3. D°. 1609, for John Smethwicke.
 4. D°. William Shakspeare, no date, John Smethwicke.
 5. D°. William Shakspeare, 1637, R. Young, for D°.

- XIX. * {
1. Hamlet, William Shakspeare, J. R. for N. L. 1604.
 2. D°. William Shakspeare, 1605, I. R. for N. L.
 3. D°. William Shakspeare, 1611, for John Smethwicke.
 4. D°. William Shakspeare, no date, W. S. for D°.
 5. D°. William Shakspeare, 1637, R. Young, for D°.
 6. D°. R. Bentley, 1695.

- XX. {
1. *Othello*, William Shakspeare, no date, Thomas Walkely.
 2. D°. William Shakspeare, 1622, N. O. for Thomas Walkely.
 3. D°. William Shakspeare, 1630, A. M. for Richard Hawkins.
 4. D°. William Shakspeare, 1655, for William Leake.

☞ Of all the remaining plays the most authentic edition is the folio 1623; yet that of 1632 is not without value; for though it be in some places more incorrectly printed than the preceding one, it has likewise the advantage of various readings, which are not merely such as reiteration of copies

will naturally produce. The curious examiner of Shakspeare's text, who possesses the first of these, ought not to be unfurnished with the second. As to the third and fourth impressions (which include the seven rejected plays) they are little better than waste paper, for they differ only from the preceding ones by a larger accumulation of errors. I had inadvertently given a similar character of the folio 1632; but take this opportunity of confessing a mistake into which I was led by too implicit a reliance on the assertions of others.

FOLIO EDITIONS.

I. Mr. William Shakspeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. Published according to the true original Copies, 1623. Fol. Printed at the Charges of W. Jaggard, Ed. Blount, J. Smethwicke, and W. Aspley.

It seems, from such a partnership, that no single publisher was at that time willing to risque his money on a complete collection of our author's plays.⁶

⁶ Every possible adulteration has of late years been practised in fitting up copies of this book for sale.

When leaves have been wanting, they have been reprinted with battered types, and foisted into vacancies, without notice of such defects and the remedies applied to them.

When the title has been lost, a spurious one has been fabricated, with a blank space left for the head of Shakspeare, afterwards added from the second, third, or fourth impression. To conceal these frauds, thick vermilion lines have been usually drawn over the edges of the engravings, which would otherwise have betrayed themselves when let into a supplemental page, however craftily it was lined at the back, and discoloured with tobacco-water till it had assumed the true *jaune antique*.

Sometimes leaves have been inserted from the second folio, and, in a known instance, the entire play of *Cymbeline*; the genuine date at the end of it [1632] having been altered into 1623.

II. D^o. 1632. Fol. Tho. Cotes, for Rob. Allot.

III. D^o. 1664. Fol. for P. C.

Since it was thought advantageous to adopt such contrivances while the book was only valued at six or seven guineas, now it has reached its present enormous price, may not artifice be still more on the stretch to vamp up copies for the benefit of future catalogues and auctions?—Shakspeare might say of those who profit by him, what Antony has observed of Enobarbus—

“ ————— my fortunes have

“ Corrupted honest men.”

Mr. Garrick, about forty years ago, paid only 1l. 16s. to Mr. Payne at the Meuse Gate for a fine copy of this folio.—After the death of our Roscius, it should have accompanied his collection of old plays to the British Museum; but had been taken out of his library, and has not been heard of since.

Here I might particularize above twenty other copies; but as their description would not always meet the wishes or interests of their owners, it may be as well omitted.

Perhaps the original impression of the book did not amount to more than 250; and we may suppose that different fires in London had their share of them. Before the year 1649 they were so scarce, that (as Mr. Malone has observed) King Charles I. was obliged to content himself with a folio 1632, at present in my possession.

Of all volumes, those of popular entertainment are soonest injured. It would be difficult to name four folios that are oftener found in dirty and mutilated condition, than this first assemblage of Shakspeare's plays—God's Revenge against Murder—The Gentleman's Recreation—and Johnson's Lives of the Highwaymen.

Though Shakspeare was not, like Fox the Martyrologist, deposited in churches, to be thumbed by the congregation, he generally took post on our hall tables; and that a multitude of his pages have “their effect of gravy,” may be imputed to the various eatables set out every morning on the same boards. It should seem that most of his readers were so chary of their time, that (like Pistol, who gnaws his leek and swears all the while,) they fed and studied at the same instant. I have repeatedly met with thin flakes of piecrust between the leaves of our author. These unctuous fragments, remaining long in close confinement, communicated their grease to several pages deep on each side of them.—It is easy enough to conceive how such accidents might happen;—how aunt Bridget's mastication might be disordered at the sudden entry of the Ghost into the Queen's closet, and how the half-chewed morsel dropped out of the gaping 'Squire's mouth, when the visionary Banquo seated himself in the chair of Macbeth. Still, it is no

IV. D°. 1685. Fol. for H. Herringman, E. Brewster and R. Bentley.

MODERN EDITIONS.

Octavo, Rowe's, London, 1709, 7 Vols.
 Duodecimo, Rowe's, ditto, 1714, 9 D°.
 Quarto, Pope's, ditto, 1725, 6 D°.
 Duodecimo, Pope's, ditto, 1728, 10 D°.
 Octavo, Theobald's, ditto, 1733, 7 D°.
 Duodecimo, Theobald's, ditto, 1740, 8 D°.
 Quarto, Hanmer's, Oxford, 1744, 6 D°.
 Octavo, Warburton's, London, 1747, 8 D°.
 D°. Johnson's, ditto, 1765, 8 D°.
 D°. Steevens's, ditto, 1766, 4 D°.
 Crown 8vo. Capell's, 1768, 10 D°.
 Quarto, Hanmer's, Oxford, 1771, 6 D°.
 Octavo, Johnson and Steevens, London, 1773,
 10 D°.
 D°. second edition, ditto, 1778, 10 D°.
 D°. (published by Stockdale) 1784, 1 D°.

small elogium on Shakspeare, that his claims were more forcible than those of hunger.—Most of the first folios now extant, are known to have belonged to ancient families resident in the country.

Since our breakfasts have become less gross, our favourite authors have escaped with fewer injuries; not that (as a very nice friend of mine observes) those who read with a coffee-cup in their hands, are to be numbered among the contributors to bibliothecal purity.

I claim the merit of being the first commentator on Shakspeare who strove, with becoming seriousness, to account for the frequent stains that disgrace the earliest folio edition of his plays, which is now become the most expensive single book in our language; for what other English volume without plates, and printed since the year 1600, is known to have sold, more than once, for thirty-five pounds, fourteen shillings? STEEVENS.

D°. Johnson and Steevens, 1785, third edition, revised and augmented by the Editor of Doddsley's Collection of old Plays, (i. e. Mr. Reed,) 10 D°.

Duodecimo, (published by Bell,) London, 1788, 20 vols.

Octavo, (published by Stockdale,) 1790, 1 D°.

Crown 8vo. Malone's, ditto, 1790, 10 D°.

Octavo, fourth edition, Johnson and Steevens, &c. ditto, 1793, 15 D°.

The dramattick works of Shakspeare, in 6 vols. octavo, with notes by Joseph Rann, A. M. Vicar of St. Trinity, in Coventry.—Oxford.

Vol. 1. - 1786.

Vol. 2. - 1787.

Vol. 3. - 1789.

Vol. 4. - 1791.

The remaining two volumes are not yet published.

The reader may not be displeased to know the exact sums paid to the different editors of Shakspeare. The following account is taken from the books of the late Mr. Tonson.

To Mr. Rowe	-	-	£. 36	10	0
Mr. Hughes ⁷	-	-	28	7	0
Mr. Pope	-	-	217	12	0
Mr. Fenton ⁸	-	-	30	12	0
Mr. Gay ⁹	-	-	35	19	6
Mr. Whatley ²	-	-	12	0	0

⁷ For correcting the press and making an index to Mr. Rowe's 12mo. edition.

⁸ For assistance to Mr. Pope in correcting the press.

⁹ For the same services.

² For correcting the sheets of Mr. Pope's 12mo.

To Mr. Theobald ³	-	-	£. 652	10	0
Mr. Warburton	-	-	560	0	0
Dr. Johnson ⁴	-	-	-	-	-
Mr. Capell	-	-	300	0	0

Of these editions some have passed several times through the press; but only such as vary from each other are here enumerated.

To this list might be added, several spurious and mutilated impressions; but as they appear to have been executed without the smallest degree of skill either in the manners or language of the time of Shakspeare, and as the names of their respective editors are prudently concealed, it were useless to commemorate the number of their volumes, or the distinct date of each publication.

Some of our legitimate editions will afford a sufficient specimen of the fluctuation of price in books.—An ancient quarto was sold for six-pence; and the folios 1623 and 1632, when first printed, could not have been rated higher than at ten shillings each.—Very lately, seven pounds, five shillings; and seventeen pounds, six shillings and six-pence, have been paid for a quarto; the first folio has been repeatedly sold for twenty-five pounds; and also for thirty-five pounds, fourteen shillings: but what price may be expected for it hereafter, is not very easy to be determined, the conscience of Mr. Fox, bookseller, in Holborn, having once permitted him to ask no less than *two guineas* for *two leaves* out of a mutilated copy of that impression,

³ Of Mr. Theobald's edition no less than 12,860 have been printed.

⁴ From the late Mr. Tonson's books it appears, that Dr. Johnson received copies of his edition for his subscribers, the first cost of which was 375*l.* and afterwards 105*l.* in money. Total 480*l.*

MALONE.

though he had several, almost equally defective, in his shop. The second folio is commonly rated at two or three guineas.⁵

At the late Mr. Jacob Tonson's sale, in the year 1767, one hundred and forty copies of Mr. Pope's edition of Shakspeare, in six volumes quarto (for which the subscribers paid six guineas,) were disposed of among the booksellers at sixteen shillings per set. Seven hundred and fifty of this edition were printed.

At the same sale, the remainder of Dr. Warburton's edition, in eight volumes octavo, printed in 1747, (of which the original price was two pounds eight shillings, and the number printed one thousand,) was sold off: viz. one hundred and seventy-eight copies, at eighteen shillings each.

On the contrary, Sir Thomas Hanmer's edition, printed at Oxford in 1744, which was first sold for three guineas, had arisen to nine or ten, before it was reprinted.

It appears, however, from the foregoing catalogue (when all reiterations of legitimate editions are taken into the account, together with five spurious ones printed in Ireland, one in Scotland, one at Birmingham, and four in London, making in the whole thirty-seven impressions) that not less than 37,500 copies of our author's works have been dispersed, exclusive of the quartos, single plays, and such as have been altered for the stage. Of the latter, as exact a list as I have been able to form, with the assistance of Mr. Reed, of Staple-Inn, (than whom no man is more conversant with English publications both ancient and modern, or

⁵ And is not worth three shillings. See an account of it, in the preface to the present [i. e. Mr. Malone's] edition. MALONE.

See, however, the Advertisement prefixed to this edition, 1793, and Mr. Malone's Preface, here reprinted. STEEVENS.

more willing to assist the literary undertakings of others) will be found in the course of the following pages. STEEVENS.

A LIST OF THE MOST
AUTHENTICK ANCIENT EDITIONS
O F
SHAKSPEARE'S POEMS.

1. Venus and Adonis, 1596, small octavo, or rather decimo sexto, R. F. for John Harrifon.

This poem, I have no doubt, was printed in quarto in 1593 or 1594, though no copy of the edition is now known to be extant.

Reprinted in 1600, 1602, 1617, 1620, 1630, &c.

2. Lucrece, quarto, 1594, Richard Field, for John Harrifon.

Reprinted in small octavo, in 1596, 1598, 1600, 1607, 1616, 1624, 1632, &c.

3. The Passionate Pilgrim, [being a collection of Poems by Shakspeare,] small octavo, 1599, for W. Jaggard; sold by William Leake.

4. The Passionate Pilgrime, or certain amorous Sonnets between Venus and Adonis, &c. The third edition, small octavo, 1612, W. Jaggard.

I know not when the second edition was printed.

5. Shakspeare's Sonnets, never before imprinted, quarto, 1609, G. Eld, for T. T.

An edition of Shakspeare's Sonnets, differing in many particulars from the original, and intermixed with the poems contained in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, and with several poems written by Thomas Heywood, was printed in 1640, in small octavo, by Thomas Cotes, sold by John Benfon.

MODERN EDITIONS.

Shakspeare's Poems, small octavo, for Bernard Lintot, no date, but printed in 1710.

The Sonnets in this edition were printed from the quarto of 1609; *Venus and Adonis*, and *Lucrece*, from very late editions, full of errors.

The Poems of William Shakspeare, containing his *Venus and Adonis*, *Rape of Lucrece*, *Sonnets*, *Passionate Pilgrim*, and *A Lover's Complaint*, printed from the authentick copies, by Malone, in octavo, in 1780.

D°. Second Edition, with the author's plays, crown octavo, 1790.

Spurious Editions of Shakspeare's Poems have also been published by Gildon, Sewell, Evans, &c.
MALONE.

PLAYS ascribed to SHAKSPEARE, either by the Editors of the two later Folios, or by the Compilers of ancient Catalogues.

1. Arraignment of Paris, 1584,⁶ Henry Marsh.

⁶ It appears from an epistle prefixed to Greene's *Arcadia*, that *The Arraignment of Paris* was written by George Peele, the author of *King David and fair Bethsabe*, &c. 1599.

2. Birth of Merlin, 1662, Tho Johnson, for Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh.
3. Edward III.⁷ 1596, for Cuthbert Burby. 2. 1599, Simon Stafford, for D^o.
4. Fair Em,⁸ 1631, for John Wright.
5. Locrine, 1595, Thomas Creede.
6. London Prodigal, 1605.
7. Merry Devil of Edmonton, 1608, Henry Ballard, for Arthur Johnson. 2. 1617, G. Eld, for D^o. 3. 1626, A. M. for Francis Falkner. 4. 1631, T. P. for D^o. 5. 1655, for W. Gilbertson.
8. Mucedorus, 1598, for William Jones. 2. 1610, for D^o. 3. 1615, N. O. for D^o. 4. 1639, for John Wright. 5. no date, for Francis Coles. 6. 1668, E. O. for D^o.
9. Pericles, 1609, for Henry Gosson. 2. 1619, for T. P. 3. 1630, J. N. for R. B. 4. 1635, Thomas Cotes.
10. Puritan, 1600, and 1607, G. Eld.
11. Sir John Oldcastle, 1600, for T. P.
12. Thomas Lord Cromwell, 1613, Tho. Snodham.
13. Two Noble Kinsmen, 1634, Tho. Cotes, for John Waterfon.
14. Yorkshire Tragedy, 1608, R. B. for T. Pavyer. D^o. 1619, for T. P. STEEVENS.

⁷ See the preceding extracts from the books at Stationers' hall.

⁸ *Fair Em*,] In Mr. Garrick's Collection, is a volume, formerly belonging to King Charles II. which is lettered on the back, "SHAKESPEARE, Vol. I." This vol. consists of *Fair Em*, *The Merry Devil*, &c. *Mucedorus*, &c. There is no other authority for ascribing *Fair Em* to our author.

LIST OF PLAYS

ALTERED FROM

SHAKSPEARE.

INVENIES ETIAM DISJECTI MEMBRA POETAE.

Tempest.

The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island. A Comedy, acted in Dorset Garden. By Sir W. D'Avenant and Dryden. 4to. 1669.

The Tempest, made into an opera by Shadwell in 1673. See Downes's Roscius Anglicanus, p. 34.

The Tempest, an Opera taken from Shakspeare. As it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. By Mr. Garrick. 8vo. 1756.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona. A Comedy written by Shakspeare, with alterations and additions, as it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. By Mr. Victor. 8vo. 1763.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

The Comical Gallant, or the Amours of Sir John Falstaffe. A Comedy, as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, by his Majesties Servants. By Mr. Dennis. 4to. 1702.

Twelfth Night.

In the preface to Love Betray'd, or the Agreeable Disappointment, a Comedy, by Charles Burnaby, 1703, that author appears to have taken part of the tale of this play, and about fifty lines from it.

Measure for Measure.

The Law against Lovers, by Sir W. D'Avenant.
Fol. 1673.

Measure for Measure, or Beauty the best Advocate. As it is acted at the Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields; written originally by Mr. Shakspeare, and now very much altered: with additions of several Entertainments of Musick. By Mr. Gildon.
4to. 1700.

Much Ado about Nothing.

The Law against Lovers. By Sir W. Davenant.
Fol. 1673.

The Universal Passion. A Comedy as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, by his Majesties Servants. By James Miller. 8vo. 1737.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

The Humours of Bottom the Weaver, by Robert Cox. 4to.

The Fairy Queen, an Opera, represented at the Queen's Theatre by their Majesties Servants. 4to.
1692.

Pyramus and Thisbe, a comick Masque, written by Richard Leveridge, performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields. 8vo. 1716.

Pyramus and Thisbe, a mock Opera, written by Shakspeare. Set to musick by Mr. Lampe. Performed at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden. 8vo. 1745.

The Fairies, an Opera, taken from a Midsummer Night's Dream written by Shakspeare, as it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. By Mr. Garrick. 8vo. 1755.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, written by Shakspeare, with Alterations and Additions, and several

new Songs. As it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. 8vo. 1763.

A Fairy Tale, in two acts, taken from Shakspeare. As it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. 8vo. 1763.

Love's Labour's Lost.

The Students, a Comedy altered from Shakspeare's Love's Labour's Lost, and adapted to the stage. 8vo. 1762.

Merchant of Venice.

The Jew of Venice, a Comedy. As it is acted at the Theatre in Little Lincoln's Inn Fields, by his Majesty's Servants. By George Granville, Esq. (afterwards Lord Lansdowne.) 4to. 1701.

As you like it.

Love in a Forest, a Comedy. As it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. By C. Johnson. 8vo. 1723.

The Modern Receipt, or a Cure for Love. A Comedy altered from Shakspeare. The Dedication is signed J. C. 12mo. 1739.

All's well that ends well.

All's well that ends well; a Comedy. Altered by Mr. Pilon, and reduced to three acts. Performed at the Haymarket Theatre, 1785. Not printed.

Taming of the Shrew.

Sawny the Scott, or the Taming of the Shrew; a Comedy, as it is now acted at the Theatre Royal, and never before printed. By John Lacy, 4to. 1698.

The Cobler of Preston, a Farce, as it is acted at the new Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. By Christopher Bullock. 12mo. 1716.

The Cobler of Preston, as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. By C. Johnson. 8vo. 1716.

A Cure for a Scold, a Ballad Opera, by James Worfdale. Taken from the Taming of the Shrew. 8vo. [1735.]

Catharine and Petruchio. By Mr. Garrick. 8vo. 1756.

Winter's Tale.

The Winter's Tale, a Play altered from Shakspeare. By Charles Marsh. 8vo. 1756.

Florizel and Perdita, by Mr. Garrick. 8vo. 1758.

Sheepshearing, or Florizel and Perdita, by ——. Dublin. 12mo. 1767.

The Sheep-shearing: a dramattick Pastoral. In three acts. Taken from Shakspeare. As it is performed at the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket. 8vo. 1777.

Comedy of Errors.

An alteration of this play under the title of Every Body Mistaken, was acted at Lincoln's Inn Fields 1716, but was never printed.

The Comedy of Errors, as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, 1779. Altered by Mr. Hull.

The Twins, or Which is Which, in three acts, altered by Mr. Woods, was acted at Edinburgh, and printed in a collection of farces at Edinburgh, 1786, Vol. IV.

Macbeth.

Macbeth, a Tragedy, with all the Alterations, Amendments, Additions, and new Songs; as it is now acted at the Duke's Theatre. By Sir William D'Avenant. 4to. 1674.

The Historical Tragedy of Macbeth (written originally by Shakspeare) newly adapted to the stage, with Alterations, as performed at the Theatre in Edinburgh. 8vo. 1753. By Mr. Lee.

King John.

Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John, a Tragedy; as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, by his Majesty's Servants. By Colley Cibber. 8vo. 1744.

King Richard II.

The History of King Richard the Second. Acted at the Theatre Royal under the title of the Sicilian Usurper: with a prefatory Epistle in Vindication of the Author, occasioned by the Prohibition of his Play on the Stage. By N. Tate. 4to. 1681.

The Tragedy of King Richard II. altered from Shakspeare. By Lewis Theobald. 8vo. 1720.

King Richard II. a Tragedy, altered from Shakspeare, and the Style imitated. By James Goodhall. Printed at Manchester. 8vo. 1772.

King Henry IV. Part I.

King Henry IV. with the Humours of Sir John Falstaff, a Tragi-comedy, as it is acted at the Theatre in Little Lincoln's Inn Fields, by his Majesty's Servants. Revived with Alterations. By Mr. Betterton. 4to. 1700.

King Henry IV. Part II.

The Sequel of Henry IV. with the Humours of Sir John Falstaff and Justice Shallow; as it is acted by his Majesty's Company of Comedians at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. Altered from Shakspeare by the late Mr. Betterton. 8vo. No date.

King Henry VI. Three Parts.

Henry the Sixth, the First Part, with the Murder of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester. As it was acted at the Duke's Theatre. By John Crowne. 4to. 1681.

Henry the Sixth, the Second Part, or the Misery of Civil War. As it was acted at the Duke's Theatre. By John Crowne. 4to. 1681.

Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, a Tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. [A few speeches and lines only borrowed from Shakspeare.] By Ambrose Philips. 8vo. 1723.

An Historical Tragedy of the Civil Wars in the Reign of King Henry VI. (being a Sequel to the Tragedy of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, and an Introduction to the Tragical History of King Richard III.) Altered from Shakspeare in the year 1720. By Theo. Cibber. 8vo. No date. [1723.]

King Richard III.

The Tragical History of King Richard III. Altered from Shakspeare. 4to. 1700. By Colley Cibber.

Troilus and Cressida.

Troilus and Cressida, or Truth found too late. A Tragedy, as it is acted at the Duke's Theatre. By John Dryden. 4to. 1679.

Timon of Athens.

The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater. As it is acted at the Duke's Theatre; made into a Play, by Thomas Shadwell. 4to. 1678.

Timon of Athens. As it is acted at the Theatre Royal on Richmond Green. Altered from Shakspeare and Shadwell. By James Love. 8vo. 1768.

Timon of Athens, altered from Shakspeare, a Tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. By Mr. Cumberland. 8vo. 1771.

Timon of Athens, altered from Shakspeare and Shadwell, by Mr. Hull, was acted at Covent Garden, 1786. Not printed.

Coriolanus.

The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, or the Fall of Caius Martius Coriolanus. As it is acted at the Theatre Royal. By Nahum Tate. 4to. 1682.

The Invader of his Country, or the Fatal Resentment. As it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. By John Dennis. 8vo. 1720.

Coriolanus, or the Roman Matron, a Tragedy, taken from Shakspeare and Thomson. As it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden: to which is added the Order of the Ovation. By Thomas Sheridan. 8vo. 1755.

Julius Cæsar.

The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar, with the Death of Brutus and Cassius: written originally by Shakspeare, and since altered by Sir William D'Avenant and John Dryden, Poets Laureat; as it is now acted by his Majesty's Company of Comedians at the Theatre Royal. To which is prefixed the Life of Julius Cæsar, abstracted from Plutarch and Suetonius. 12mo. 1719.

The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar, altered, with a Prologue and Chorus. 4to. 1722.

The Tragedy of Marcus Brutus, with the Prologue and the two last Chorusses. 4to. 1722. Both by John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham.

Antony and Cleopatra.

Antony and Cleopatra, an Historical Play written by William Shakspeare, fitted for the Stage by abridging only; and now acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. By Edward Capell. 12mo. 1758.

Cymbeline.

The Injured Princess, or the Fatal Wager. As it was acted at the Theatre Royal, by his Majesty's Servants. By Tho. Durfey. 4to. 1682.

Cymbeline, King of Great Britain, a Tragedy written by Shakspeare, with some Alterations. By Charles Marsh. 8vo. 1755.

Cymbeline, a Tragedy, altered from Shakspeare. As it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden. By W. Hawkins. 8vo. 1759.

Cymbeline, altered by Mr. Garrick. Acted at Drury Lane, 1761. 12mo. 1762.

Titus Andronicus.

Titus Andronicus, or the Rape of Lavinia. Acted at the Theatre Royal. A Tragedy, altered from Mr. Shakspeare's Works. By Edward Ravenscroft. 4to. 1687.

King Lear.

The History of King Lear, acted at the Duke's Theatre. Revived with Alterations. By Nahum Tate. 4to. 1681.

The History of King Lear, as it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden. By George Colman. 8vo. 1768.

Romeo and Juliet.

Romeo and Juliet, altered into a Tragi-comedy, by James Howard, Esq. See Downes, p. 22.

Caius Marius, by Tho. Otway, 4to. 1680.

Romeo and Juliet, a Tragedy, revised and altered from Shakspeare. By Theo. Cibber. 8vo. No date. [1744.]

Romeo and Juliet, altered by Mr. Garrick. 12mo. 1750.

From the Preface to the Republication of Marfh's Cymbeline in 1762, it appears that he had likewise made an alteration of Romeo and Juliet.

Hamlet.

Hamlet, altered by M. Garrick. Acted at Drury Lane, 1771. Not printed. STEEVENS.

LIST OF
DETACHED PIECES OF CRITICISM
ON
SHAKSPEARE, HIS EDITORS, &c.

A short View of Tragedy; its original, excellency, and corruption. With some Reflections on Shakspeare and other Practitioners for the Stage. By Mr. Rymer, Servant to their Majesties. Small 8vo. 1693.

Some Reflections on Mr. Rymer's Short View of Tragedy, and an Attempt at a Vindication of

Shakspeare, in an Essay directed to John Dryden, Esq. By Charles Gildon.—This tract is found only in Gildon's *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays on several subjects*, small 8vo. 1694.

Remarks on the Plays of Shakspeare. By C. Gildon, 8vo. Printed at the end of the seventh volume of Rowe's edition. 1710.

An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare, with some Letters of Criticism to the Spectator. By Mr. Dennis. 8vo. 1712.

Shakspeare restored: or a Specimen of the many Errors as well committed as unamended, by Mr. Pope in his late Edition of this Poet. Designed not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the true Reading of Shakspeare in all the Editions ever yet published. By Mr. Theobald. 4to. 1726.

An Answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakspeare, in a Letter to a Friend, being a Vindication of the old Actors who were the publishers and performers of that Author's Plays. Whereby the Errors of their Edition are further accounted for, and some Memoirs of Shakspeare and the Stage History of his Time are inserted, which were never before collected and published. By a strolling Player. [John Roberts.] 8vo. 1729.

Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark, written by William Shakspeare. Printed for W. Wilkins in Lombard Street. 8vo. 1736.

Explanatory and Critical Notes on divers Passages of Shakspeare's Plays, by Francis Peck. Printed with his "New Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. John Milton." 4to. 1740.

An Essay towards fixing the true Standards of Wit and Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule: to which is added an Analyfis of the Characters of an Humourist, Sir John Falstaff, Sir Roger de Coverley, and Don Quixote. [By Corbyn Morris, Esq.] 8vo. 1744.

Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth: with Remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's Edition of Shakspeare. To which is affixed—Proposals for a new Edition of Shakspeare, with a Specimen. [By Dr. Samuel Johnson.] 12mo. 1745.

A Word or two of Advice to William Warburton, a Dealer in many words. By a Friend. [Dr. Grey.] With an Appendix containing a taste of William's spirit of railing. 8vo. 1746.

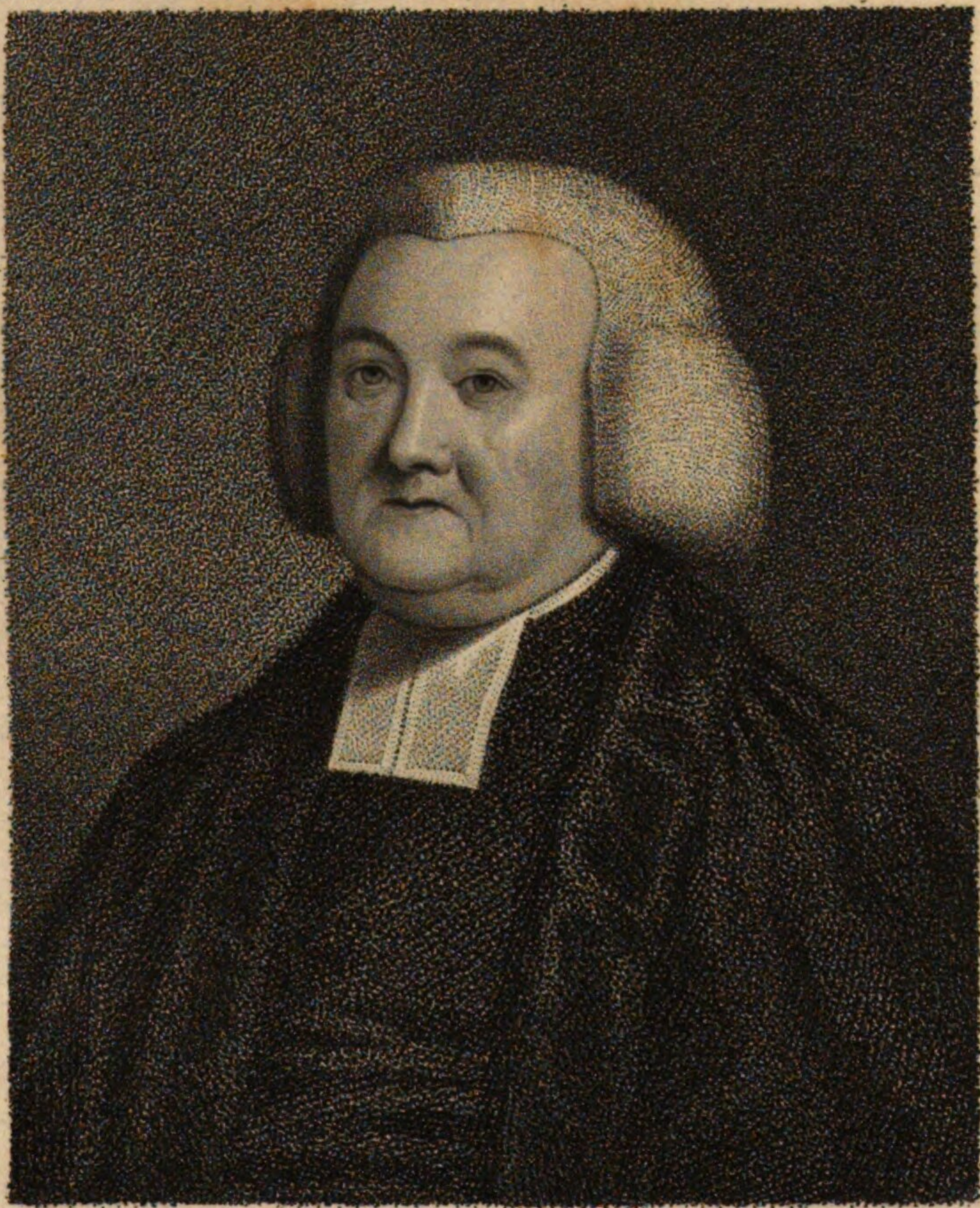
Critical Observations on Shakspeare: by John Upton, Prebendary of Rochester. 8vo. First Edition, 1746. Second Edition, 1748.

Essay on English Tragedy, with Remarks on the Abbé Le Blanc's Observations on the English Stage. By William Guthrie, Esq. 8vo. no date, but printed in 1747.

An Enquiry into the Learning of Shakspeare, with Remarks on several Passages of his Plays. In a Conversation between Eugenius and Neander. By Peter Whalley, A. B. Fellow of St. John's College Oxford. 8vo. 1748.

An Answer to certain Passages in Mr. W——'s Preface to his Edition of Shakspeare, together with some Remarks on the Errors and many false Criticisms in the Work itself. 8vo. 1748.

Remarks upon a late Edition of Shakspeare: with a long string of Emendations borrowed by



Harding Del.

Ridley Sc.

THE REV. PETER WHALLEY. M.A.

Pub. Nov. 1791. by E. Harding Fleet Street.

by the celebrated Editor from the Oxford Edition, without acknowledgement. To which is prefixed a Defence of the late Sir Thomas Hanmer, Bart. Addressed to the Rev. Mr. Warburton, Preacher of Lincoln's Inn, &c. 8vo. No date.

The Canons of Criticism and Glossary, being a Supplement to Mr. Warburton's Edition of Shakspeare. Collected from the Notes in that celebrated Work, and proper to be bound up with it. By the other Gentleman of Lincoln's Inn. [Mr. Edwards.] First Edition. 8vo. 1748. Seventh Edition, with Additions. 8vo. 1765.

Remarks on Shakspeare by Mr. Roderick, are printed at the end of this last Edition.

An Attempte to rescue that aunciente English Poet and Play-wrighte Maister Williame Shakspeare from the many errours faulſely charged on him by certaine new-fangled Wittes; and to let him speak for himſelfe, as right well he wotteth, when freedde from the many careleſs miſtakings of the heedleſs firſt Imprinters of his Workes. By a Gentleman formerly of Gray's Inn. [Mr. Holt.] 8vo. 1749.

[May 1, 1750, Mr. Holt iſſued out Propoſals for publiſhing by ſubſcription, both in octavo and twelves, an edition of our author's plays.]

Miſcellaneous Obſervations on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: with a Preface containing ſome general Remarks on the Writings of Shakspeare. 8vo. 1752.

The Beauties of Shakspeare: regularly ſelected from each Play: with a general Index digeſting them under proper Heads. Illustrated with explanatory Notes, and ſimilar Paſſages from ancient

VOL. I. H h

and modern Authors. By William Dodd, B. A. late of Clare Hall, Cambridge. 2 Vols. 12mo. First Edition, 1752. Second Edition, 1757. Third Edition in 3 Vols. 1780.

Shakspeare illustrated: or the Novels and Histories on which the Plays of Shakspeare are founded, collected and translated from the original Authors, with critical Remarks. In two Volumes. [By Mrs. Lenox.] 12mo. 1753.

A third Volume with the same Title, 1754.

The Novel from which the Play of the Merchant of Venice written by Shakspeare, is taken, translated from the Italian. To which is added, a Translation of a Novel from the Decamerone of Boccaccio. 8vo. 1755.

Critical, Historical, and Explanatory Notes on Shakspeare, with Emendations of the Text and Metre: by Zachary Grey, LL.D. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1755.

The Castrated Letter of Sir Thomas Hanmer, in the Sixth Volume of BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA, wherein is discovered the first rise of the present Bishop of Gloucester's quarrel with that Baronet, about his edition of Shakspeare's plays: to which is added an impartial account of the extraordinary means used to suppress this remarkable letter. By a Proprietor of that work. [Philip Nichols.] 4to. 1763.

A Revival of Shakspeare's Text, wherein the Alterations introduced into it by the more modern Editors and Criticks are particularly considered. [By Mr. Heath.] 8vo. 1765.

A Review of Dr. Johnson's New Edition of Shakspeare; in which the Ignorance or Inattention

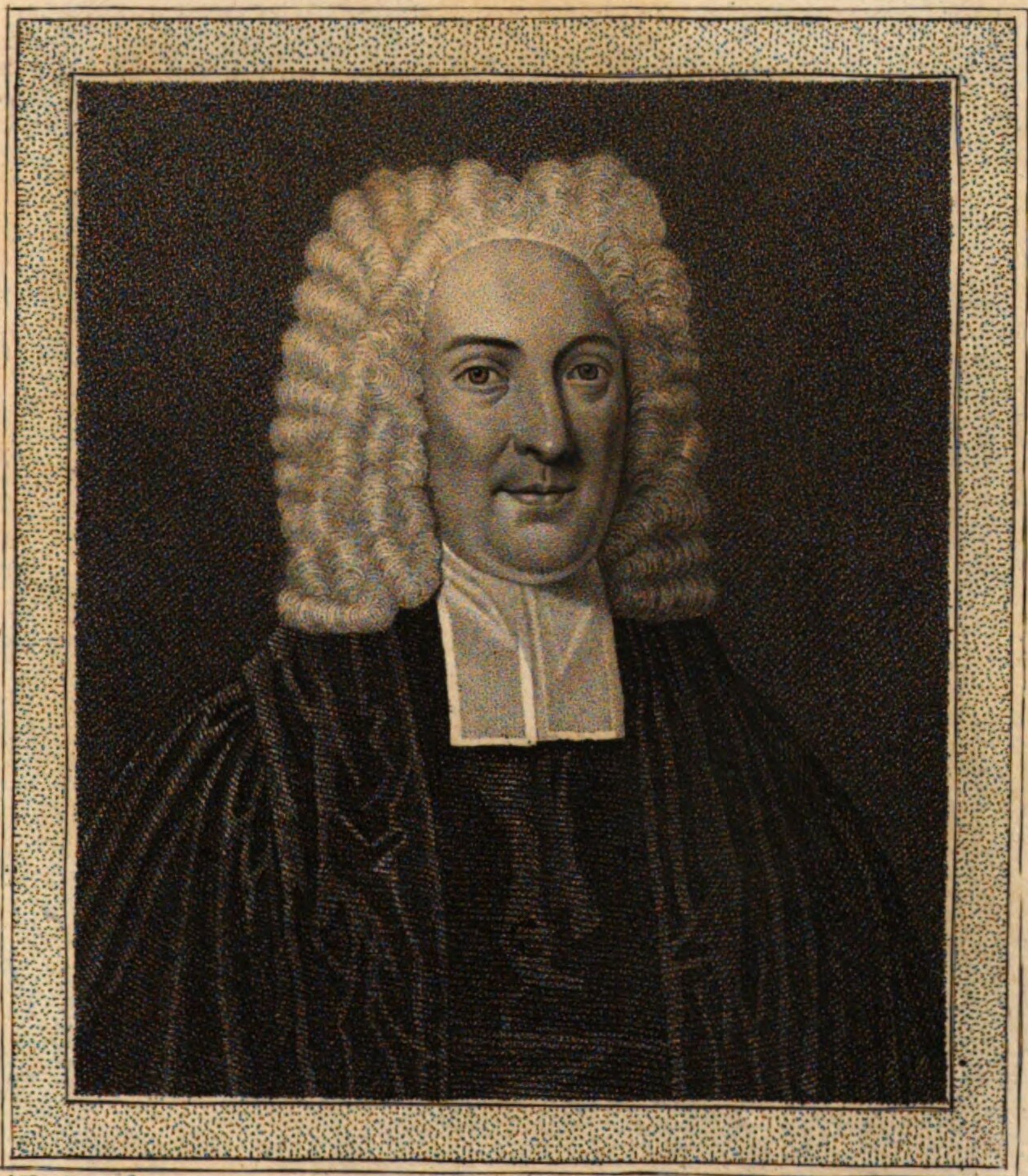


J. T. Reynolds Pinx.

J. Barlowe Esq. R.A. Sculp.

M^{RS} LENOX.

Pubd. by R. Harding Fleet Street March 2. 1792.



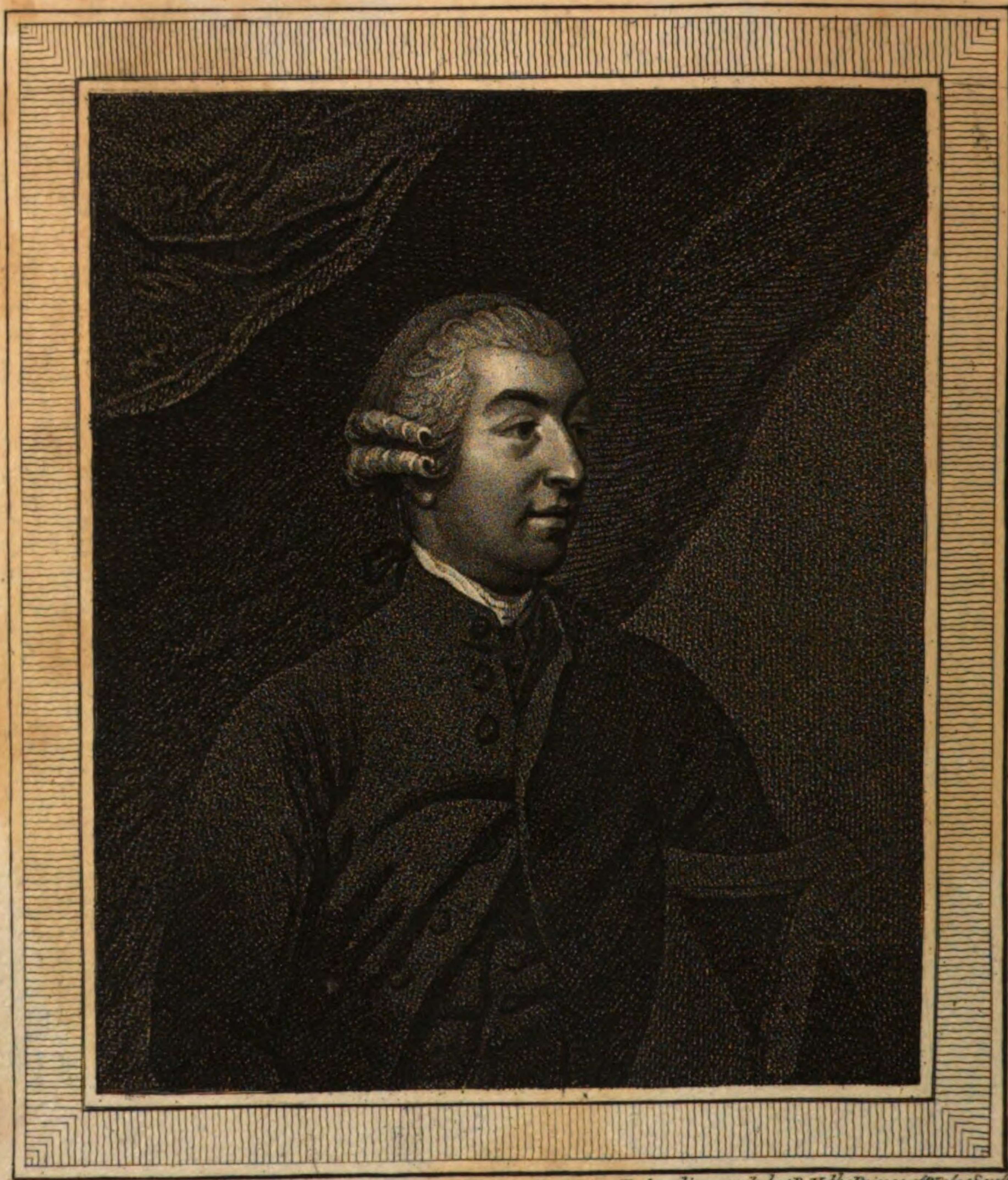
S. Harding Del.

Knight Sc.

THE REV^D ZACHARY GREY. L.L.D.

From the Original Picture in the Possession of the Rev^d Will^m. Cole of Ely.

Pub. Sep. 10. 1791. by E. Harding Fleet Street.



J. Jones Engraver Extraordinary to his R. H. the Prince of Wales Sculp

THOMAS TYRWHITT, ESQ^r,

Pub. March 1, 1792. by B. Harding Fleet Street.



Sir Joshua Reynolds pin.

J. Bartolozzi del. & sc.

M^{RS} MONTAGU.

London Pub^d Jan. 7 1792. by R. Harding Fleet Street

of that Editor is exposed, and the Poet defended from the Persecution of his Commentators. By W. Kenrick. 8vo. 1765.

An Examination of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Mr. Johnson's Edition of Shakspeare. [By Mr. Barclay.] 8vo. 1766.

A Defence of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Dr. Johnson's Shakspeare, containing a number of curious and ludicrous Anecdotes of Literary Biography. By a Friend. [i. e. W. Kenrick.] 8vo. 1766.

Observations and Conjectures on some Passages of Shakspeare. [By Tho. Tyrwhitt, Esq.] 8vo. 1766.

An Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare, addressed to Joseph Cradock, Esq. By the Rev. Dr. Richard Farmer. 8vo. 1767. Second Edition, crown 8vo. 1767. Third Edition, crown octavo, 1789.

A Letter to David Garrick, Esq. concerning a Glossary to the Plays of Shakspeare, on a more extensive Plan than has hitherto appeared. To which is added a Specimen. By Richard Warner, Esq. 8vo. 1768.

An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakspeare, compared with the Greek and French dramatick Poets, with some Remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Monsieur de Voltaire. By Mrs. Montagu. 8vo. First Edition, 1769. Second Edition, 1776.

The Tragedy of King Lear as lately published, vindicated from the Abuse of the Critical Reviewers; and the wonderful Genius and Abilities of

those Gentlemen for Criticism, set forth, celebrated, and extolled. By the Editor of King Lear. [Charles Jennens, Esq.] 8vo. 1772.

Shakspeare. 4to. This piece was written by Dr. Kenrick Prescott, and is dated Feb. 6, 1774.

Curfory Remarks on Tragedy, on Shakspeare, and on certain French and Italian Poets, &c. Crown 8vo. 1774.

A philosophical Analysis and Illustration of some of Shakspeare's remarkable Characters. By William Richardson, Esq. Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow. 12mo. First Edition, 1773. Second Edition, 1774.

The Morality of Shakspeare's Drama illustrated. By Mrs. Griffith. 8vo. 1775.

A Letter to George Hardinge, Esq. on the Subject of a Passage in Mr. Steevens's Preface to his Impression of Shakspeare. [By the Rev. Mr. Collins.] 4to. 1777. [Dr. Johnson observed of this performance, that it was "a great gun without powder and ball."] On the title-page of a copy of it presented by Mr. Capell, together with his *Shakspeariana*, to Trinity College, Cambridge, is the following manuscript note: "Seen through the press by Mr. H——, &c. Note in p. 18 added, and the postscript new-molded by him. E. C." i. e. Edward Capell.

From the foregoing circumstance it appears that Mr. H—— (like Congreve's Petulant) assisted in writing a letter to himself. This epistle, however, (as we have since been informed,) received some additional touches from the pen of the late Lord Dacre.—*Tantæ molis erat*——. But all would not succeed. The subscribers to Mr. Capell's notes were

so few, that his editor was ashamed to print their names; and the book itself is become waste paper.

Discours sur Shakspeare et sur Monsieur de Voltaire, par Joseph Baretti, Secretaire pour la Correspondence etrangere de l'Academie Royale Britannique. 8vo. 1777.

An Essay on the dramattick Character of Sir John Falstaff. [By Mr. Morgan.] 8vo. 1777.

A Letter from Monsieur de Voltaire to the French Academy. Translated from the original Edition just published at Paris 8vo. 1777.

A Supplement to the Edition of Shakspeare's Plays published in 1778.—Containing additional Observations by several of the former Commentators; to which are subjoined the Genuine Poems of the same Author, and Seven Plays that have been ascribed to him; with Notes, by the Editor [Mr. Malone] and others. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1780.

Notes and Various Readings to Shakspeare, by Edward Capell. 3 Vols. 4to. 1781.

Remarks critical and illustrative on the Text and Notes of the last Edition of Shakspeare. [i. e. Mr. Steevens's Edition in 1778.] [By Mr. Ritson.] 8vo. 1783.

Contes moraux, amusans & instructifs, a l'usage de la jeunesse, tirés des Tragedies de Shakspeare; par M. Perrin, Editeur de la nouvelle Edition du Dictionnaire de Chambaud, &c.—A Londres, chez Robson, Cadell, & Elmsly. 1783. 12mo.

A familiar Address to the curious in English Poetry, more particularly to the Readers of Shakspeare. By Therfites Literarius. 8vo. 1784.

A Second Appendix to Mr. Malone's Supplement to the last Edition of the Plays of Shakspeare; containing additional Observations by the Editor of the Supplement. 8vo. 1783.—Of this Appendix only fifty Copies were printed.

Essays on Shakspeare's dramattick Characters of Richard the Third, King Lear, and Timon of Athens. To which are added, an Essay on the Faults of Shakspeare, and additional Observations on the Character of Hamlet. By Mr. Richardson. 12mo. 1784.

The Beauties of Shakspeare selected from his works. To which are added, the principal Scenes in the same Author. 12mo. 1784. Printed for Kearsley.

Dramattick Miscellanies, consisting of critical Observations on the Plays of Shakspeare, &c. By Thomas Davies. 3 Vols. Crown 8vo. 1784.

Comments on the last Edition of Shakspeare's Plays. By John Monck Mason, Esq. 8vo. 1785.

Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare. By the Author of Observations on modern Gardening. [Mr. Whateley.] 8vo. 1785.

Macbeth Reconsidered; an Essay intended as an Answer to part of the Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare. 8vo. 1786.

A Fragment on Shakspeare, extracted from Advice to a young Poet. By the Reverend Martin Sherlock. Translated from the French. 8vo. 1786.

A Concordance to Shakspeare; suited to all the Editions, in which the distinguished and parallel Passages in the Plays of that justly-admired Writer are methodically arranged. To which are added, three hundred Notes and Illustrations entirely new. 8vo. 1787.

Imperfect Hints towards a new Edition of Shakspeare, written chiefly in the Year 1782. 4to. 1787.

The Same. Part the Second and last. 4to. 1788.

Essays on Shakspeare's dramatick Character of Sir John Falstaff, and on his Imitation of Female Characters. To which are added some general Observations on the Study of Shakspeare. By Mr. Richardson. 12mo. 1788.

The Quip Modest; a few Words by way of Supplement to Remarks critical and illustrative on the Text and Notes of the last Edition of Shakspeare; occasioned by a Republication of that Edition [1785] revised and augmented by the Editor of Doddsley's Old Plays. [By Mr. Ritson.] 8vo. 1788.

An Index to the remarkable Passages and Words made Use of by Shakspeare; calculated to point out the different Meanings to which the Words are applied. By the Reverend Samuel Ayscough. 8vo. 1790.

Curfory Criticisms on the Edition of Shakspeare published by Edmond Malone. [By Mr. Ritson.] 8vo. 1792.

A Letter to the Rev. Richard Farmer, D. D. Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, relative to the Edition of Shakspeare published in 1790, and some late Criticisms on that work. By Edmond Malone, Esq. 8vo. 1792.

Curfory Remarks upon the Arrangement of the Plays of Shakspeare occasioned by reading Mr. Malone's Essay on the chronological Order of those celebrated Pieces. By the Reverend J. Hurdis, M. A. 8vo. 1792.

AN
ATTEMPT
TO ASCERTAIN THE
ORDER
IN WHICH
THE PLAYS OF SHAKSPEARE
WERE WRITTEN.²

——— *Primusque per avia campi*

Usque procul, (necdum totas lux moverat umbras,)

Nescio quid visu dubium, incertumque moveri,

Corporaque ire videt. STATIUS.

Trattando l'ombre come cosa salda. DANTE.

EVERY circumstance that relates to those persons whose writings we admire, awakens and interests our curiosity. The time and place of their birth, their education and gradual attainments, the dates of their productions and the reception they severally met with, their habits of life, their private friendships, and even their external form, are all points, which, how little soever they may have been adverted to by their contemporaries, strongly engage the attention of posterity. Not satisfied with receiving the aggregated wisdom of ages as a free gift, we visit the mansions where our instructors are said to have resided, we contemplate with pleasure the trees under whose shade they once reposed, and wish to see and to converse with those sages, whose labours have added strength to virtue, and efficacy to truth.

² The first edition of this Essay was published in January 1778.

Shakspeare above all writers, since the days of Homer, has excited this curiosity in the highest degree; as perhaps no poet of any nation was ever more idolized by his countrymen. An ardent desire to understand and explain his works, is, to the honour of the present age, so much increased within the last forty years, that more has been done towards their elucidation, during that period,³ than in a century before. All the ancient copies of his plays, hitherto discovered, have been collated with the most scrupulous accuracy. The meanest books have been carefully examined, only because they were of the age in which he lived, and might happily throw a light on some forgotten custom, or obsolete phraseology: and, this object being still kept in view, the toil of wading through *all such reading as was never read* has been cheerfully endured, because no labour was thought too great, that might enable us to add one new laurel to the father of our drama. Almost every circumstance that tradition or history has preserved relative to him or his works, has been investigated, and laid before the publick; and the avidity with which all communications of this kind have been received, sufficiently proves that the time expended in the pursuit has not been wholly misemployed.

However, after the most diligent inquiries, very few particulars have been recovered, respecting his private life or literary history: and while it has been the endeavour of all his editors and commentators to illustrate his obscurities, and to regulate and correct his text, no attempt has been made to trace the progress and order of his plays. Yet

³ Within the period here mentioned, the commentaries of Warburton, Edwards, Heath, Johnson, Tyrwhitt, Farmer, and Steevens, have been published.

surely it is no incurious speculation to mark the gradations ⁴ by which he rose from mediocrity to

⁴ It is not pretended that a regular scale of gradual improvement is here presented to the publick; or that, if even Shakspeare himself had left us a chronological list of his dramas, it would exhibit such a scale. All that is meant is, that, as his knowledge increased, and as he became more conversant with the stage and with life, his performances *in general* were written more happily and with greater art; or (to use the words of Dr. Johnson) “that however favoured by nature, he could only impart what he had learned, and as he must increase his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.” Of this opinion also was Mr. Pope. “It must be observed, (says he,) that when his performances had merited the protection of his prince, and when the encouragement of the court had succeeded to that of the town, the works of his riper years are manifestly raised above those of his former.—And I make no doubt that this observation would be found true in every instance, were but editions extant from which we might learn the exact time when every piece was composed, and whether writ for the town or the court.”—From the following lines it appears, that Dryden also thought that our author’s most imperfect plays were his earliest dramatick compositions:

“Your Ben and Fletcher in their first young flight,

“Did no *Volpone*, no *Arbaces* write;

“But hopp’d about, and short excursions made

“From bough to bough, as if they were afraid;

“And each were guilty of some *Slighted Maid*.

“Shakspeare’s own muse his *Pericles* first bore;

“*The Prince of Tyre* was elder than *the Moor*;

“’Tis miracle to see a first good play;

“All hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas-day.

“A slender poet must have time to grow,

“And spread and burnish, as his brothers do:

“Who still looks lean, sure with some p— is curst,

“But no man can be *Falstaff* fat at first.”

Prologue to the tragedy of *Circe*.

The plays which Shakspeare produced before the year 1600, are known, and are seventeen or eighteen in number. The rest of his dramas, we may conclude, were composed between that year and the time of his retiring to the country. It is incumbent on those, who differ in opinion from the great authorities abovementioned,—

the summit of excellence; from artless and sometimes uninteresting dialogues, to those unparelled compositions, which have rendered him the delight and wonder of successive ages.

The materials for ascertaining the order in which his plays were written, are indeed so few, that, it is to be feared, nothing very decisive can be produced on this subject. In the following attempt to trace the progress of his dramattick art, probability alone is pretended to. The silence and inaccuracy of those persons, who, after his death, had the revival of his papers, will perhaps for ever prevent our attaining to any thing like proof on this head. Little then remains, but to collect into one view, from his several dramas, and from the ancient tracts in which they are mentioned, or alluded to, all the circumstances that can throw any light on this new and curious inquiry. From those circumstances, and from the entries in the books of the Stationers' Company, extracted and published by Mr. Steevens, (to whom every admirer of Shakspeare has the highest obligations,) it is probable that our author's plays were written nearly in the following succession; which, though it cannot at this day be ascertained to be their true order, may yet be considered as approaching nearer to it,

who think with Rowe, that "*we are not to look for his beginnings in his least perfect works,*" it is incumbent, I say, on those persons, to enumerate in the former class, that is, among the plays produced before 1600, compositions of equal merit with *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, and *Twelfth Night*, which we have reason to believe were all written in the latter period; and among his late performances, that is among the plays which are supposed to have appeared after the year 1600, to point out pieces, as hasty and indigested, as *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which, we know, were among his earlier works.

than any which has been observed in the various editions of his works.

Of the twenty-one plays which were not printed in our author's life-time,⁵ the *majority* were, I believe, late compositions.⁶ The following arrangement is in some measure formed on this notion. Two reasons may be assigned, why Shakspeare's late performances were not published till after his death. 1. If we suppose him to have written for the stage during a period of twenty years, those pieces which were produced in the latter part of that period, were less likely to pass through the

⁵ They are, *King Henry VI. P. I.* The Second and Third Parts of *King Henry VI.* (as he wrote them) *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *King John*, *All's well that ends well*, *As you like it*, *King Henry VIII.* *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon of Athens*, *Coriolanus*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *Twelfth Night*. None of these, except *Othello*, were printed in quarto, but appeared first in the folio edition published by Heminge and Condell, in 1623. Of these plays, seven, viz. *The First Part of King Henry VI.* (allowing that play to be Shakspeare's,) *The Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI.* *King John*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, were certainly early compositions, and are an exception to the general truth of this observation. One other, viz. *All's well that ends well*, though supposed to have been an early production, was, it must be acknowledged, not published in Shakspeare's life-time; but for the date of this play we rely only on conjecture.

⁶ This supposition is strongly confirmed by *Meres's* list of our author's plays, in 1598. From that list, and from other circumstances, we learn, that of the fourteen plays which were printed in Shakspeare's life-time, thirteen were written before the end of the year 1600.—The fourteen plays published in our author's life-time, are—*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *King Richard II.* *King Richard III.* *The First Part of King Henry IV.* *The Second Part of King Henry IV.* *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Henry V.* *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *King Lear*.

press in his life-time, as the curiosity of the publick had not been so long engaged by them, as by his early compositions. 2. From the time that Shakspeare had the superintendence of a play-house, that is, from the year 1603,⁷ when he and several others obtained a licence from King James to exhibit comedies, tragedies, histories, &c. at the Globe Theatre, and elsewhere, it became strongly his interest to preserve those pieces unpublished, which were composed between that year and the time of his retiring to the country; manuscript plays being then the great support of every theatre. Nor were the plays which he wrote after he became a manager, so likely to get abroad, being confined to his own theatre, as his former productions, which perhaps had been acted on different stages, and of consequence afforded the players at the several houses where they were exhibited, an easy opportunity of making out copies from the separate parts transcribed for their use, and of selling such copies to printers; by which means there is reason to believe that some of them were submitted to the press, without the consent of the author.

The following is the order in which I suppose the plays of Shakspeare to have been written:

⁷ None of the plays which in the ensuing list are supposed to have been written subsequently to this year, were printed till after the author's death, except *King Lear*, the publication of which was probably hastened by that of the old play with the same title, in 1605.—The copy of *Troilus and Cressida*, which seems to have been composed the year before King James granted a licence to the company at the Globe Theatre, appears to have been obtained by some uncommon artifice. "Thank fortune (says the editor) for the *scape* it hath made amongst you; since, by the grand possessors' wills, I believe, you should have pray'd for them [r. it] rather than been pray'd."—By *the grand possessors*, Shakspeare and the other managers of the Globe Theatre, were certainly intended.

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | FIRST PART OF KING HENRY VI. | 1589. |
| 2. | SECOND PART OF KING HENRY VI. | 1591. |
| 3. | THIRD PART OF KING HENRY VI. | 1591. |
| 4. | A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, | 1592. |
| 5. | COMEDY OF ERRORS, - - | 1593. |
| 6. | TAMING OF THE SHREW, - - | 1594. |
| 7. | LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST, - - | 1594. |
| 8. | TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, - | 1595. |
| 9. | ROMEO AND JULIET, - - | 1595. |
| 10. | HAMLET, - - - - | 1596. |
| 11. | KING JOHN, - - - - | 1596. |
| 12. | KING RICHARD II. - - - | 1597. |
| 13. | KING RICHARD III. - - - | 1597. |
| 14. | FIRST PART OF KING HENRY IV. | 1597. |
| 15. | SECOND PART OF KING HENRY IV. | 1598. |
| 16. | THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, - | 1598. |
| 17. | ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, | 1598. |
| 18. | KING HENRY V. - - - - | 1599. |
| 19. | MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, - | 1600. |
| 20. | AS YOU LIKE IT, - - - | 1600. |
| 21. | MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, - | 1601. |
| 22. | KING HENRY VIII. - - - | 1601. |
| 23. | TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, - - | 1602. |
| 24. | MEASURE FOR MEASURE, - - | 1603. |
| 25. | THE WINTER'S TALE, - - - | 1604. |
| 26. | KING LEAR, - - - - | 1605. |
| 27. | CYMBELINE, - - - - | 1605. |
| 28. | MACBETH, - - - - | 1606. |
| 29. | JULIUS CÆSAR, - - - - | 1607. |
| 30. | ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, - | 1608. |
| 31. | TIMON OF ATHENS, - - - | 1609. |
| 32. | CORIOLANUS, - - - - | 1610. |
| 33. | OTHELLO, - - - - | 1611. |
| 34. | THE TEMPEST, - - - - | 1612. |
| 35. | TWELFTH NIGHT, - - - - | 1614. |

I. THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY VI. 1589.

In what year our author began to write for the stage, or which was his first performance, has not been hitherto ascertained. And indeed we have so few lights to direct our inquiries, that any speculation on this subject may appear an idle expence of time. But the method which has been already marked out, requires that such facts should be mentioned, as may serve in any manner to elucidate these points.

Shakspeare was born on the 23d of April, 1564, and was probably married in, or before, September 1582, his eldest daughter, Susanna, having been baptized on the 26th of May, 1583. At what time he left Warwickshire, or was first employed in the playhouse, tradition does not inform us. However, as his son Hamnet and his daughter Judith were baptized at Stratford, Feb. 2, 1584-5, we may presume that he had not left the country at that time.

He could not have wanted an easy introduction to the theatre; for Thomas Greene,⁸ a celebrated

⁸ "There was not (says Heywood in his preface to *Greene's Tu Quoque*, a comedy,) an actor of his nature in his time, of better ability in the performance of what he undertook, more applauded by the audience, of greater grace at the court, or of more general love in the city." The birth-place of Thomas Greene is ascertained by the following lines, which he speaks in one of the old comedies, in the character of a clown:

"I prattled poesie in my nurse's arms,
 "And, born where late our swan of Avon sung,
 "In Avon's streams we both of us have lav'd,
 "And both came out together."

Chetwood, in his *British Theatre*, quotes this passage from the comedy of the *Two Maids of Moreclack*; but no such passage is there to be found. He deserves but little credit; having certainly forged many of his dates; however, he probably met with these

comedian, was his townsman, perhaps his relation, and Michael Drayton was likewise born in Warwickshire; the latter was nearly of his own age, and both were in some degree of reputation soon after the year 1590. If I were to indulge a conjecture, I should name the year 1591, as the era when our author commenced a writer for the stage; at which time he was somewhat more than twenty-seven years old. The reasons that induce me to fix on that period are these. In Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetry*, published in 1586, we meet with the names of most of the celebrated poets of that time; particularly those of George Whetstone⁹ and Anthony Munday,² who were *dramatick* writers;

lines in some ancient play, though he forgot the name of the piece from which he transcribed them. Greene was a writer as well as an actor. There are some verses of his prefixed to a collection of Drayton's poems, published in the year 1613. He was perhaps a kinsman of Shakspeare's. In the register of the parish of Stratford, Thomas Greene, alias Shakspeare, is said to have been buried there, March 6, 1589. He might have been the actor's father.

⁹ The author of *Promos and Cassandra*, a play which furnished Shakspeare with the fable of *Measure for Measure*.

² This poet is mentioned by Meres, in his *Wit's Treasury*, 1598, as an eminent comick writer, and the *best plotter* of his time. He seems to have been introduced under the name of Don Antonio Balladino, in a comedy that has been attributed to Ben Jonson, called *The Case is Altered*, and from the following passages in that piece appears to have been city-poet; whose business it was to compose an annual panegyrick on the Lord Mayor, and to write verses for the pageants: an office which has been discontinued since the death of Elkanah Settle in 1722:

"*Onion*. Shall I request your name?

"*Ant*. My name is Antonio Balladino.

"*Oni*. Balladino! You are not pageant-poet to the city of Milan, fir, are you?

Ant. "I supply the place, fir, when a worse cannot be had, fir.—Did you see the last pageant I set forth?"

Afterwards Antonio, speaking of the plays he had written, says,

but we find no trace of our author, or of any of his works. Three years afterwards, Puttenham printed his *Art of English Poesy*; and in that work also we look in vain for the name of Shakspeare.³ Sir John Harrington in his *Apologie for Poetry*, prefixed to the *Translation of Ariosto*, (which was entered in the Stationers' books Feb. 26, 1590-1, in which year it was published,) takes occasion to speak of the theatre, and mentions some of the celebrated dramas of that time; but says not a word of Shakspeare, or of his plays. If any of his dramattick compositions had then appeared, is it imaginable, that Harrington should have mentioned the *Cambridge Pedantius*, and *The Play of the Cards*, which last, he tells us was a *London* [i. e. an English] comedy, and have passed by, unnoticed, the new prodigy of the dramattick world?

“ Let me have good ground,—no matter for the pen; *the plot* shall carry it.

“ *Oni.* Indeed that's right; *you are in print, already for THE BEST PLOTTER.*

“ *Ant.* Ay; I might as well have been put in for a dumb-shew too.”

It is evident, that this poet is here intended to be ridiculed by Ben Jonson: but he might, notwithstanding, have been deservedly eminent. That malignity which endeavoured to tear a wreath from the brow of Shakspeare, would certainly not spare inferior writers.

³ The thirty-first chapter of the first book of Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy* is thus entitled: “ Who in any age have bene the most commended writers in our English Poesie, and the author's censure given upon them.”

After having enumerated several authors who were then celebrated for various kinds of composition, he gives this succinct account of those who had written for the stage: “ *Of the latter sort I thinke thus;—that for tragedie, the Lord Buckhurst and Maister Edward Ferrys, for such doings as I have sene of theirs, do deserve the byest price; the Earl of Oxford and Maister Edwardes of her Majestie's Chappell, for comedie and enterlude.*”

In Spenser's *Tears of the Muses*, first printed in 1591, the following lines are found in Thalia's complaint on account of the decay of dramatick poetry :

“ And he the man, whom nature's self had made
 “ To mock her selfe, and truth to imitate,
 “ With kindly counter under mimick shade,
 “ Our pleasant *Willy*, ah, is dead of late;
 “ With whom all joy and jolly merriment
 “ Is also deaded, and in dolour drent.

“ Instead thereof scoffing scurrilitie
 “ And scornful follie with contempt is crept,
 “ Rolling in rymes of shameless ribaudrie,
 “ Without regard or due decorum kept:
 “ Each idle wit at will presumes to make
 “ And doth the learneds task upon him take.

“ But that same gentle spirit, from whose pen
 “ Large streames of honnie and sweet nectar flow,
 “ Scorning the boldness of such base-born men,
 “ Which dare their follies forth so rashlie throwe,
 “ Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell,
 “ Than so him selfe to mockerie to sell.”

These lines were inserted by Mr. Rowe in his first edition of *The Life of Shakspeare*, and he then supposed that they related to our poet, and alluded to his having withdrawn himself for some time from the publick, and discontinued writing, from “a disgust he had taken to the then ill taste of the town and the mean condition of the stage.” But as Mr. Rowe suppressed this passage in his second edition, it may be presumed that he found reason to change his opinion. Dryden, however, he informs us, always thought that these verses related to Shakspeare: and indeed I do not recollect any dramatick poet of that time, to whom the character which they delineate is applicable, except our author. It is remarkable that the very same epithet,

which Spenser has employed, "But that same gentle spirit," &c. is likewise used by the players in their preface, where they speak of Shakspeare:—"who as he was a happie imitator of nature, was a most gentle expresser of it." On the other hand some little difficulty arises from the line—"And doth the *learneds* task upon him take;" for our poet certainly had no title to that epithet. Spenser, however, might have used it in an appropriated sense, *learned in all the business of the stage*; and in this sense the epithet is more applicable to Shakspeare than to any poet that ever wrote.

It should however, be remembered, that the name *Willy*, for some reason or other which it is now in vain to seek, appears to have been applied by the poets of Shakspeare's age to persons who were not christened *William*. Thus, (as Dr. Farmer observes to me,) in "An Eglogue made long since on the death of Sir Philip Sydney," which is preserved in Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody*, 1602, we find that celebrated writer lamented in almost every stanza by the name of *Willy*:

"*Willy* is dead,

"That wont to lead

"Our flocks and us, in mirth and shepherd's glee," &c.

"Of none but *Willie's* pipe they made account," &c.

Spenser's *Willy*, however, could not have been Sir Philip Sydney, for he was dead some years before the *Tears of the Muses* was published.

If these lines were intended to allude to our author, then he must have written some comedies in or before the year 1591; and the date which I have assigned to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is erroneous. I cannot expect to influence the decision of my reader on a subject on which I have not

been able to form a decided opinion myself; and therefore shall content myself with merely stating the difficulties on each side. Supposing Shakspeare to have written any piece in the year 1590, Sir John Harrington's silence concerning him in the following year appears inexplicable.

But whatever poet may have been in Spenser's contemplation, it is certain that Shakspeare had commenced a writer for the stage, and had even excited the jealousy of his contemporaries, before September 1592. This is now decisively proved by a passage extracted by Mr. Tyrwhitt from Robert Greene's *Groat'sworth of Witte bought with a Million of Repentance*, in which there is an evident allusion to our author's name, as well as to a line in the *Second Part of King Henry VI.*

This tract was published at the dying request of Robert Greene, a very voluminous writer of that time. The conclusion of it, as Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed, is "an address to his brother poets to dissuade them from writing for the stage, on account of the ill treatment which they were used to receive from the players." It begins thus: "*To those gentlemen his quondam acquaintance that spend their wits in making playes, R. G. wisbeth a better exercise, and wisdom to prevent his extremities.*" His first address is undoubtedly to Christopher Marlowe, the most popular and admired dramatick poet of that age, previous to the appearance of Shakspeare. "Wonder not," (says Greene,) "for with thee will I first begin, thou famous gracer of tragedians, that Greene, (who hath said *with thee*, like the foole in his heart, there is no God,) should now give glory unto his greatness; for penetrating is his power, his hand is heavy upon me; &c. Why should thy excellent wit, his gift, be so blinded, that thou should give no glory to the giver?—The

brother [f. *breather*] of this diabolical atheism is dead, and in his life had never the felicitie he aimed at: but as he beganne in craft, lived in feare, and ended in despair. And wilt thou, my friend, be his disciple?—Looke unto me, by him perswaded to that libertie, and thou shalt find it an infernal bondage.”

Greene's next address appears to be made to Thomas Lodge. “With thee I joyne young Juvenall, that byting satirist, that lastly with mee together writ a comedie. Sweet boy, might I advise thee, be advised, and get not many enemies by bitter words: inveigh against vaine men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so well: thou hast libertie to reprove all, and name none.—Stop shallow water still running, it will rage; tread on a worme, and it will turn; then blame not schollers, who are vexed with sharpe and bitter lines, if they reproove too much libertie of reproof.”

George Peele, as Mr. Tyrwhitt has remarked, is next addressed. “And thou no lesse deserving than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferior, driven, as my selfe, to extreame shifts, a little have I to say to thee: and were it not an idolatrous oath, I would sweare by sweet *S. George*, thou art unworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so meane a stay. Base-minded men all three of you, if by my misery you be not warned: for unto none of you, like me, sought those burs to cleave; those puppets, I meane, that speake from our mouths; those anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have bin beholding, is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall (were yee in that case that I am now) be both of them at once forsaken? *Yes, trust them not, for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that with his tygres heart*

wrapt in a players hide, *supposes hee is as well able to bombaste out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes fac-totum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a countrey.* O that I might intreat your rare wittes to be employed in more profitable courses; and let these apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaynte them with your admired inventions."

This tract appears to have been written by Greene not long before his death; for near the conclusion he says, "*Albeit weakness will scarce suffer me to write, yet to my fellow-scolliers about this city will I direct these few insuing lines.*" He died, according to Dr. Gabriel Harvey's account, on the third of September, 1592.⁴

I have lately met with a very scarce pamphlet entitled *Kind Harts Dreame*, written by Henry Chettle, from the preface to which it appears that he was the editor of Green's *Groatsworth of Wit*, and that it was published between September and December 1592.⁵ Our poet, we find, was not without reason displeased at the preceding allusion to him. As what Chettle says of him, corresponds with the character which all his contemporaries have given him, and the piece is extremely rare, I shall extract from the *Address to the Gentlemen Readers*, what relates to the subject before us:

"About three months since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in fundry booksellers' hands, among others his *Groatsworth of Wit*, in

⁴ Additions by Oldys to Winstanley's *Lives of the Poets*, MS.

⁵ Probably in October, for on the Stationers' books I find *The Repentaunce of Robert Greene, Master of Arts*, entered by John Danter, Oct. 6, 1592. The full title of Greene's pamphlet is, "*Greene's Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance.*"

which a letter written to divers play-makers is offensively by one or two of them taken; and because on the dead they cannot be revenged, they wilfully forge in their conceites a living author: and after tossing it to and fro, no remedy but it must light on me. How I have, all the time of my conversing in printing, hindered the bitter inveighing against schollers, it hath been very well known; and how in that I dealt, I can sufficiently prove. With *neither* of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them [Marlowe] I care not if I never be. The other, [Shakspeare,] whom at that time I did not so much spare, as since I wish I had, for that as I have moderated the hate of living writers, and might have used my own discretion, (especially in such a case, the author being dead,) that I did not, I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault; because *my selfe have seen his demeanour no less civil than be excellent in the qualitie he professes: Besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honestie, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art.* For the first, whose learning I reverence, and at the perusing of Greene's booke, strooke out what then in conscience I thought he in some displeasure writ; or had it been true, yet to publish it was intollerable; him I would wish to use me no worse than I deserve. I had onely in the copy this share: it was il written, as sometime Greene's hand was none of the best; licensed it must bee, ere it could be printed, which could never bee if it could not be read. To be brief, I writ it over, and as near as I could followed the copy; onely in that letter I put something out, but in the whole book not a word in; for I protest it was all Greenes, not mine, nor Master

Nashes, as some unjustly have affirmed. Neither was he the writer of an Epistle to *The Second Part of Gerileon*; though by the workman's error T. N. were set to the end: that I confesse to be mine, and repent it not.

“ Thus, Gentlemen, having noted the private causes that made me nominate myself in print, being as well to purge Master Nashe of what he did not, as to justifie what I did, and withall to confirm what M. Greene did, I beseech you to accept the publick cause, which is both the desire of your delight and common benefit; for though the toye bee shadowed under the title of *Kind Harts Dreame*, it discovers the false hearts of divers that wake to commit mischief,” &c.

That I am right in supposing the two who took offence at Greene's pamphlet were Marlowe and Shakspeare, whose names I have inserted in a preceding paragraph in crotchets, appears from the passage itself already quoted; for there was nothing in Greene's exhortation to Lodge and Peele, the other two persons addressed, by which either of them could possibly be offended. Dr. Farmer is of opinion that the second person addressed by Greene is not Lodge, but *Nashe*, who is often called *Juvenal* by the writers of that time; but that he was not meant, is decisively proved by the extract from Chettle's pamphlet; for he never would have laboured to vindicate Nashe from being the writer of the *Groatsworth of Wit*, if any part of it had been professedly addressed to him.⁶ Besides, Lodge had written a play in conjunction with Greene, called *A Looking Glass for London and*

⁶ Nashe himself also takes some pains in an Epistle prefixed to *Pierce Penniless* &c. to vindicate himself from being the author of Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*.

England, and was author of some fatirical pieces; but we do not know that Nashe and Greene had ever written in conjunction.

Henry Chettle was himself a dramattick writer, and appears to have become acquainted with Shakspeare, or at least seen him, between Sept. 1592, and the following December. Shakspeare was at this time twenty-eight years old; and then we find from the testimony of this writer *his demeanour was no less civil than he excellent in the qualitie he professed*. From the subsequent paragraph—"Divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honestie, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art,—" it may be reasonably presumed, that he had exhibited more than one comedy on the stage before the end of the year 1592; perhaps *Love's Labour's Lost* in a less perfect state than it now appears in, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

In what time soever he became acquainted with the theatre, we may presume that he had not composed his first piece long before it was acted; for being early incumbered with a young family, and not in very affluent circumstances, it is improbable that he should have suffered it to lie in his closet, without endeavouring to derive some profit from it; and in the miserable state of the drama in those days the meanest of his genuine plays must have been a valuable acquisition, and would hardly have been refused by any of our ancient theatres.

In a *Dissertation on the Three Parts of King Henry VI.* which I have subjoined to those plays, I have mentioned that I do not believe *The First Part of King Henry VI.* to have been the composition of Shakspeare; or that at most he wrote but one or two scenes in it. It is unnecessary here to repeat the circumstances on which that opinion is founded.

Not being Shakspeare's play, (as I conceive,) at whatever time it might have been first exhibited, it does not interfere with the supposition already stated, that he had not produced any dramatick piece before 1590.

The First Part of King Henry VI. which, I imagine, was formerly known by the name of *The historical Play of King Henry VI.* had, I suspect, been a very popular piece for some years before 1592, and perhaps was first exhibited in 1588 or in 1589. Nashe, in a tract entitled *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devill*, which was first published in 1592,⁷ expressly mentions one of the characters in it, John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, who dies in the fourth act of the piece, and who is not, I believe, introduced in any other play of that time. "How" (says he) "would it have joyed brave Talbot, *the terror of the French*,⁸ to think that after he had lain two hundred years in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least, (at several times,) who, in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding?"

In the Dissertation above referred to, I have endeavoured to prove that this play was written neither by Shakspeare, nor by the author or authors of the two other plays formed on a subsequent

⁷ *Pierce Penniless his Supplication &c.* was first published in that year, being entered for the first time on the Stationers' books by Richard Jones, Aug. 1592. There was a second edition in the same year, printed by Abell Jeffes for John Busbie.

⁸ Thus Talbot is described in *The First Part of King Henry VI.* Act I. sc. iii:

"Here, said they, is *the terror of the French*."

Again, in Act V. sc. i:

"Is Talbot slain, the Frenchman's only scourge,

"Your kingdom's terror?"

period of the reign of Henry the Sixth. By whom it *was* written, it is now, I fear, impossible to ascertain. It was not entered on the Stationers' books nor printed till the year 1623, when it was registered with Shakspeare's undisputed plays by the editors of the first folio, and improperly entitled *The Third Part of King Henry VI.* In one sense it might be called so, for two plays on the subject of that reign had been printed before. But considering the history of that king, and the period of time which the piece comprehends, it ought to have been called, what in fact it is, *The First Part of King Henry VI.*

At this distance of time it is impossible to ascertain on what principle it was that our author's friends, Heminge and Condell, admitted *The First Part of King Henry VI.* into their volume: but I suspect they gave it a place as a necessary introduction to the two other parts, and because Shakspeare had made some slight alterations, and written a few new lines in it.

Titus Andronicus, as well as *The First Part of King Henry VI.* may be referred to the year 1589, or to an earlier period; but not being in the present edition admitted into the regular series of our author's dramas, I have not given it a place in the preceding table of his plays. In a note prefixed to that play, which may be found in Vol. XIII. p. 249, & *seq.* I have declared my opinion that *Andronicus* was not written by Shakspeare, or that at most a very few lines in it were written by him; and have stated the reasons on which that opinion is founded. From Ben Jonson's Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, 1614, we learn that this piece had been exhibited on the stage twenty-five or thirty years before, that is, at the lowest computation, in 1589; or, taking a middle period, (which

is perhaps more just,) in 1587. "A booke entitled a *Noble Roman History of Titus Andronicus*," (without any author's name,) was entered at Stationers' Hall by John Danter, Feb. 6, 1593-4. This was undoubtedly the play, as it was printed in that year, according to Langbaine, who alone appears to have seen the first edition, and acted by the servants of the earls of Pembroke, Derby, and Suffex. Of this play there was a second edition in quarto in 1611, in the title-page of which neither the name of Shakspeare, (though he was in the zenith of his reputation,) nor of any author, is found, and therefore we may presume that the title-page of the first edition also (like the entry on the Stationers' books) was anonymous. Marlowe's *King Edward II.* and some other old plays were performed by the servants of the earl of Pembroke, by whom not one of Shakspeare's undisputed dramas was exhibited.

2. } SECOND AND THIRD PARTS OF K. HENRY VI.
3. } 1591.

In a Dissertation annexed to these plays, I have endeavoured to prove that they were not written *originally* by Shakspeare, but formed by him on two preceding dramas, one of which is entitled *The first part of the Contention of the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, &c. and the other *The true tragedie of Richard duke of Yorke*, &c. My principal object in that dissertation was, to shew from various circumstances that those two old plays, which were printed in 1600, were written by some writer or writers who preceded Shakspeare, and moulded by him, with many alterations and additions, into the shape in which they at present

appear in his works under the titles of *The Second and Third Part of K. Henry VI.*; and if I have proved that point, I have obtained my end. I ventured, however, to go somewhat further, and to hazard a conjecture concerning the persons by whom they were composed: but this was not at all material to my principal argument, which, whether my conjectures on that head were well or ill founded, will remain the same.

The passage which has been already quoted from Greene's pamphlet, led me to suspect that these old plays were the production of either him, or Peele, or both of them. I too hastily supposed that the words which have been printed in a former page,—“Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow beautified with *our* feathers,” &c. as they immediately followed a paragraph addressed to George Peele, were addressed to him particularly; and consequently that the word *our* meant Peele and Greene, the writer of the pamphlet: but these words manifestly relate equally to the *three* persons previously addressed, and allude to the theatrical compositions of Marlowe, Lodge, Peele, and Greene; whether we consider the writer to lament in general that players avail themselves of the labours of authors, and derive more profit from them than the authors themselves, or suppose him to allude to some particular dramatick performances, which had been originally composed by himself or one of his friends, and thrown into a new form by some other dramatist, who was also a player. The two old plays therefore on which *The Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI.* were formed, may have been written by any one or more of the authors above enumerated. Towards the end of the Essay I have produced a passage from the old *King John*, 1591, from which it appeared

to me probable that the two elder dramas, which comprehend the greater part of the reign of King Henry VI. were written by the author of *King John*, who ever he was; and some circumstances which have lately struck me, confirm an opinion which I formerly hazarded, that Christopher Marlowe was the author of that play. A passage in his historical drama of *King Edward II.* which Dr. Farmer has pointed out to me since the Dissertation was printed, also inclines me to believe, with him, that Marlowe was the author of one, if not both, of the old dramas on which Shakspeare formed the two plays which in the first folio edition of his works are distinguished by the titles of *The Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI.*

Two lines in *The Third Part of King Henry VI.* have been produced as a decisive and incontrovertible proof that these pieces were originally and entirely written by Shakspeare. "Who" (says Mr. Capell,) "sees not the future monster, and acknowledges at the same time the pen that drew it, in these two lines only, spoken over a king who lies stabb'd before him, [i. e. before Richard duke of Gloster,]—

"What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted."

let him never pretend to discernment hereafter, in any case of this nature."

The two lines above quoted are found in *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, &c.* on which, according to my hypothesis, Shakspeare's *Third Part of K. Henry VI.* was formed. If therefore these lines decisively mark the hand of Shakspeare, the *old* as well as the *new* play must have been written by him, and the fabrick which I have built with some labour, falls at once to the ground.

But let not the reader be alarmed; for if it suffers from no other battery but this, it may last till "the crack of doom." Marlowe, as Dr. Farmer observes to me, has the very same phraseology in *King Edward II.*:

"——— scorning that the lowly earth

"Should drink his blood, mounts up to the air."

and in the same play I have lately noticed another line in which we find the very epithet here applied to the pious Lancastrian king:

"Frown'st thou thereat, aspiring Lancaster?"

So much for Mr. Capell's irrefragable proof. It is not the proper business of the present essay to enter further into this subject. I merely seize this opportunity of saying, that the preceding passages now incline me to think Marlowe the author of *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, &c.* and perhaps of the other old drama also, entitled *The First Part of the Contention of the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster.*

The latter drama was entered on the Stationers' books by T. Millington, March 12, 1593-4. This play, however, (on which *The Second Part of King Henry VI.* is formed,) was not then printed; nor was *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, &c.* on which Shakspeare's *Third Part of King Henry VI.* is founded, entered at Stationers' Hall at the same time: but they were both printed *anonymously* by Thomas Millington, in quarto, in the year 1600.

A very ingenious friend has suggested to me, that it is not probable that Shakspeare would have ventured to use the ground-work of another dramatist, and form a new play upon it, in the lifetime of the author or authors. I know not how much weight this argument is entitled to. We are

certain that Shakspeare *did* transcribe a whole scene almost *verbatim* from *The old Taming of a Shrew*, and incorporate it into his own play on the same subject; and we do not know that the author of the original play was then dead. Supposing however this argument to have some weight, it does not tend in the slightest degree to overturn my hypothesis that *The Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI.* were formed on the two preceding dramas, of which I have already given the titles; but merely to shew, that I am either mistaken in supposing that they were new-modelled and rewritten in 1591, or in my conjecture concerning the authors of the elder pieces on which those of Shakspeare were formed. Greene died in September 1592, and Marlowe about May 1593. By assigning our poet's part in these performances to the end of the year 1593 or the beginning of 1594, this objection is done away, whether we suppose Greene to have been the author of one of the elder plays, and Marlowe of the other, or that celebrated writer the author of them both.

Dr. Farmer is of opinion, that Ben Jonson particularly alludes in the following verses to our poet's having followed the steps of Marlowe in the plays now under our consideration, and greatly *surpassed* his original:

“ For, if I thought my judgment were of years,

“ I should commit thee surely with thy peers;

“ And tell how much thou did'st our Lily *out-shine*,

“ Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line.”

From the epithet *sporting*, which is applied to Kyd, and which is certainly in some measure a quibble on his name, it is manifest that he must have produced some *comick* piece upon the scene, as well as the two tragedies of his composition,

which are now extant, *Cornelia*, and *The Spanish Tragedy*. This latter is printed, like many plays of that time, anonymously. Dr. Farmer with great probability suggests to me, that Kyd might have been the author of *The old Taming of a Shrew* printed in 1594, on which Shakspeare formed a play with nearly the same title.⁸ The praise which Ben Jonson gives to Shakspeare, that he "*outshines Marlowe and Kyd*," on this hypothesis, will appear to stand on one and the same foundation; namely on his eclipsing those ancient dramatists by new-modelling their plays, and producing pieces much superior to theirs, on stories which they had already formed into dramas, that, till Shakspeare appeared, satisfied the publick, and were classed among the happiest efforts of dramatick art.

4. A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, 1592.

The poetry of this piece, glowing with all the warmth of a youthful and lively imagination, the many scenes which it contains of almost continual rhyme,⁹ the poverty of the fable, and want of discrimination among the higher personages, dispose me to believe that it was one of our author's earliest attempts in comedy.²

⁸ Kyd was also, I suspect, the author of the old plays of *Hamlet*, and of *King Leir*. See p. 523.

⁹ See p. 510, n. 3.

² Dryden was of opinion that *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, was our author's first dramatick composition:

"Shakspeare's own muse his *Pericles* first bore,

"*The Prince of Tyre* was elder than *The Moor*."

Prologue to the tragedy of *Circe*, by Charles D'Avenant, 1677.

Mr. Rowe in his *Life of Shakspeare* (first edition) says, "There is good reason to believe that the greatest part of *Pericles* was not

It seems to have been written, while the ridiculous competitions, prevalent among the histrionick tribe, were strongly impressed by novelty on his mind. He would naturally copy those manners first, with which he was first acquainted. The ambition of a theatrical candidate for applause he has happily ridiculed in *Bottom* the weaver. But among the more dignified persons of the drama we

not written by him, though it is owned some part of it certainly was, particularly the last act." I have not been able to learn on what authority the latter assertion was grounded. Rowe in his second edition omitted the passage.

Pericles was not entered in the Stationers' books till May 2, 1608, nor printed till 1609; but the following lines in a metrical pamphlet, entitled *Pimlyco, or Runne Red-cap*, 1595, ascertain it to have been written and exhibited on the stage, prior to that year:

- " Amazde I stood to see a crowd
- " Of civil throats stretch'd out so lowd:
- " (As at a new play,) all the roomes
- " Did swarme with gentiles mix'd with groomes;
- " So that I truly thought all these
- " Came to see *Shore* or *Pericles*."

The play of *Jane Shore* is mentioned (together with another very ancient piece not now extant) in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, 1613: "I was ne'er at one of these plays before; but I should have seen *Jane Shore*, and my husband hath promised me any time this twelvemonth to carry me to *The Bold Beauchamps*." The date of *The Bold Beauchamps* is in some measure ascertained by a passage in D'Avenant's *Playhouse to be let*:

- " ——— There is an old tradition,
- " That in the times of mighty *Tamburlaine*,
- " Of conjuring *Faustus*, and *The Beauchamps Bold*,
- " You poets used to have the second day."

Tamburlain and *Faustus* were exhibited in or before 1590.

The lamentable end of *Shore's* wife also made a part of the old anonymous play of *King Richard III.* which was entered in the Stationers' books, June 19, 1594. Both the dramas in which *Jane Shore* was introduced were probably on the stage soon after 1590; and from the manner in which *Pericles* is mentioned in the verses above quoted, we may presume, that drama was equally ancient and equally well known.

look in vain for any traits of character. The manners of Hippolita, *the Amazon*, are undistinguished from those of other females. Theseus, the associate of Hercules, is not engaged in any adventure worthy of his rank or reputation, nor is he in reality an agent throughout the play. Like King Henry VIII. he goes out a Maying. He meets the lovers in perplexity, and makes no effort to promote their happiness; but when supernatural accidents have reconciled them, he joins their company, and concludes his day's entertainment by uttering some miserable puns at an interlude represented by a troop of clowns. Over the fairy part of the drama he cannot be supposed to have any influence. This part of the fable, indeed, (at least as much of it as relates to the quarrels of Oberon and Titania,) was not of our author's invention.³—Through the whole piece, the more exalted characters are subservient to the interests

³ The learned editor of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, printed in 1775, observes in his introductory discourse, (Vol. IV. p. 161,) that Pluto and Proserpina in the Marchant's Tale, appear to have been "the true progenitors of Shakspeare's Oberon and Titania." In a tract already quoted, *Greene's Groatsworth of Witte*, 1592, a player is introduced, who boasts of having performed the part of *the King of Fairies* with applause. Greene himself wrote a play, entitled *The Scottishe Historie of James the Fourthe, slaine at Floddon, intermixed with a pleasant Comedie presented by Oberon King of Fayeries*; which was entered at Stationers' hall in 1594, and printed in 1598. Shakspeare, however, does not appear to have been indebted to this piece. The plan of it is shortly this. Bohan, a Scot, in consequence of being disgusted with the world, having retired to a tomb where he has fixed his dwelling, is met by *After Oberon*, king of the fairies, who entertains him with an antick or dance by his subjects. These two personages, after some conversation, determine to listen to a tragedy, which is acted before them, and to which they make a kind of chorus, by moralizing at the end of each act.

of those beneath them. We laugh with Bottom and his fellows, but is a single passion agitated by the faint and childish sollicitudes of Hermia and Demetrius, of Helena and Lyfander, those shadows of each other?—That a drama, of which the principal personages are thus insignificant, and the fable thus meagre and uninteresting, was one of our author's earliest compositions, does not, therefore, seem a very improbable conjecture; nor are the beauties with which it is embellished, inconsistent with this supposition; for the genius of Shakspeare, even in its minority, could embroider the coarsest materials with the brightest and most lasting colours.

Oberon and *Titania* had been introduced in a dramattick entertainment exhibited before Queen Elizabeth in 1591, when she was at Elvetham in Hampshire; as appears from *A Description of the Queene's Entertainment in Progresse at Lord Hartford's, &c.* printed in 4to. in 1591. Her majesty, after having been pestered a whole afternoon with speeches in verse from the three Graces, Sylvanus, Wood Nymphs, &c. is at length addressed by the Fairy Queen, who presents her majesty with a chaplet,

“ Given me by Auberon [*Oberon*] the fairie king.”

A Midsummer Night's Dream was not entered at Stationers' hall till Oct. 8, 1600, in which year it was printed; but is mentioned by Meres in 1598.

From the comedy of *Doctor Dodipoll*, Mr. Steevens has quoted a line, which the author seems to have borrowed from Shakspeare:

“ 'Twas I that led you through the painted meads,
 “ Where the light *fairies* danc'd upon the flowers,
 “ Hanging in every leaf an orient pearl.”

So, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* :

“ And hang a pearl in ev'ry cowslip's ear.”

Again :

“ And that same dew, which sometimes on the buds

“ Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,

“ Stood now within the pretty flouret's eyes,

“ Like tears,” &c.

There is no earlier edition of the anonymous play in which the foregoing lines are found, than that in 1600; but *Doctor Dodipowle* is mentioned by Nashe, in his preface to *Gabriel Harvey's Hunt is up*, printed in 1596.

The passage in the fifth act, which has been thought to allude to the death of Spenser,⁴ is not inconsistent with the early appearance of this comedy; for it might have been inserted between the time of that poet's death, and the year 1600, when the play was published. And indeed, if the allusion was intended, which I do not believe, the passage must have been added in that interval; for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was certainly written in, or before 1598, and Spenser, we are told by Sir James Ware, (whose testimony with respect to this controverted point must have great weight,) did not die till 1599: “ others, (he adds,) have it wrongly, 1598.”⁵ So careful a searcher into anti-

⁴ “ The thrice three muses, mourning for the death

“ Of learning, late deceas'd in beggary.”

⁵ Preface to Spenser's *View of the State of Ireland*. Dublin, fol. 1633. This treatise was written, according to Sir James Ware, in 1596. The testimony of that historian, relative to the time of Spenser's death, is confirmed by a fact related by Ben Jonson to Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, and recorded by that writer. When Spenser and his wife were forced in great distress to fly from

quity, who lived so near the time, is not likely to have been mistaken in a fact, concerning which he appears to have made particular inquiries.

The passage in question, however, in my apprehension, has been misunderstood. It relates, I conceive, not to the death of Spenser, but to *the nine Muses lamenting the decay of learning*, in that

their house, which was burnt in the Irish Rebellion, the earl of Essex sent him twenty pieces; but he refused them; telling the person that brought them, he was sure he had no time to spend them. He died soon afterwards, according to Ben Jonson's account, in King-street. Lord Essex was not in Ireland in 1598, and was there from April to September in the following year.

It should also be remembered that verses by Spenser are prefixed to Lewknor's *Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, published in 1599.

That this celebrated poet was alive in Sept. 1598, is proved by the following paper, addressed by Queen Elizabeth to the Lords Justices of Ireland, which is preserved in the Museum, MSS. Harl. 286, and has not, I believe, been noticed by any of his biographers:

“ Last of Sept. 1598.

“ To the Lords Justices of Ireland.

“ Though we doubt not but you will without any motion from us have good regard for the appointing of meete and serviceable persons to be Sheriffs in the severall counties, which is a matter of great importance, especially at this time, when all parts of the realme are tinged with the infection of rebellion, yet wee thinke it not amisse sometime to recommend unto you such men as wee should [wish] to have for that office. Among whom we may justly reckon Edm. Spenser, a gentleman dwelling in the county of Corke, who is so well known unto you all for his good and commendable parts, (being a man endowed with good knowledge in learning, and not unskilful or without experience in the service of the warres,) as we need not use many words in his behalf. And therefore as we are of opinion that you will favour him for himselfe and of your own accord, so we do pray you that this letter may increase his credit so far forth with you as that he may not fayle to be appointed Sheriffe of the county of Corke, unlesse there be to you knowne some important cause to the contrary.

“ We are perswaded he will so behave himselfe in this particular as you shall have just cause to allowe of our recommendation, and his good service. And so,” &c.

author's poem entitled *The Tears of the Muses*, which was published in 1591: and hence probably the words, "*late deceas'd in beggary.*" This allusion, if I am right in my conjecture, may serve to confirm the date assigned to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

5. COMEDY OF ERRORS, 1593.

The only note of time that occurs in this play is found in the following passage:

"*Ant. S.* In what part of her body stands—
France?"

"*Drom. S.* In her forehead, arm'd and reverted,
making war against the *hair.*"

I have no doubt that an equivoque was here intended, and that, beside the obvious sense, an allusion was intended to King Henry IV. the *beir* of France,⁶ concerning whose succession to the throne there was a civil war in that country, from August 1589, when his father was assassinated, for several years. Henry, after struggling long against the power and force of the League, extricated himself from all his difficulties by embracing the Roman Catholick religion at St. Denis, on Sunday the 25th of July, 1593, and was crowned king of France in Feb. 1594; I therefore imagine this play was written before that period. In 1591 Lord Essex was sent with 4000 troops to the French king's assistance, and his brother Walter was killed before Rouen in Normandy. From that time till Henry was peaceably settled on the throne, many

⁶ The words *beir* and *hair* were, I make no doubt, pronounced alike in Shakspeare's time, and hence they are frequently confounded in the old copies of his plays.

bodies of troops were sent by Queen Elizabeth to his aid: so that his situation must then have been a matter of notoriety, and a subject of conversation in England.

This play was neither entered on the Stationers' books, nor printed, till 1623, but is mentioned by Meres in 1598, and exhibits internal proofs of having been one of Shakspeare's earliest productions. I formerly supposed that it could not have been written till 1596; because the translation of the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, from which the plot appears to have been taken, was not published till 1595. But on a more attentive examination of that translation, I find that Shakspeare might have seen it before publication; for from the printer's advertisement to the reader, it appears that for some time before it had been handed about in MS. among the translator's friends. The piece was entered at Stationers' Hall, June 10, 1594, and as the author had translated all the comedies of Plautus, it may be presumed that the whole work had been the employment of some years: and this might have been one of the earliest translated. Shakspeare must also have read some other account of the same story not yet discovered; for how otherwise could he have got the names of *Erraticus* and *Surreptus*, which do not occur in the translation of Plautus? There the brothers are called *Menæchmus Socraticus*, and *Menæchmus the traveller*.

The *alternate* rhymes that are found in this play, as well as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, are a further proof that these pieces were among our author's earliest productions. We are told by himself that *Venus and Adonis* was "the

first heir of his invention." *The Rape of Lucrece* probably followed soon afterwards. When he turned his thoughts to the stage, the measure which he had used in those poems, naturally presented itself to him in his first dramatick essays: I mean in those plays which were written *originally* by himself. In those which were grounded, like the *Henries*, on the preceding productions of other men, he naturally followed the example before him, and consequently in those pieces no alternate rhymes are found.

The doggrel measure, which, if I recollect right, is employed in none of our author's plays except *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*, also adds support to the dates assigned to these plays: for these long doggrel verses, as I have observed in a note at the end of the piece now under our consideration, are written in that kind of metre which was usually attributed by the dramatick poets before his time to some of their inferior characters. He was imperceptibly infected with the prevailing mode in these his early compositions; but soon learned to "deviate boldly from the common track," left by preceding writers.

A play with the same title as that before us, was exhibited at Gray's inn in December 1594; but I know not whether it was Shakspeare's play, or a translation from Plautus. "After such sports, (says the writer of *Gesta Grayorum*, 1688,) a *Comedy of Errors*, like to Plautus his *Menechmus*, was played by the players: so that night was begun and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and errors. Whereupon it was ever afterwards called *the Night of Errors*." The Registers of Gray's-inn have been examined for the purpose of ascertaining whether the play above-mentioned was

our author's; but they afford no information on the subject.

From its having been represented, by *the players*, not by the gentlemen of the inn, I think it probable that it was Shakspeare's piece.

The name of *Dowdabel*, which is mentioned in this play, occurs likewise in an Eclogue entitled *The Shepherd's Garland*, by Michael Drayton, printed in 4to. in 1593.

6. THE TAMING OF THE SHREW, 1594.

This play and *The Winter's Tale* are the only pieces which I have found reason, since the first edition of this Essay appeared, to attribute to an era widely different from that in which I had originally placed them.⁷ I had supposed the piece now under consideration to have been written in the year 1606. On a more attentive perusal of it, and more experience in our author's style and manner, I am persuaded that it was one of his very early productions, and near in point of time to *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

In the old comedies, antecedent to the time of our author's writing for the stage, (if indeed they deserve that name,) a kind of doggerel measure is often found, which, as I have already observed, Shakspeare adopted in some of those pieces which were undoubtedly among his early compositions; I mean his *Errors*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*. This kind of metre being found also in the play before

⁷ A minute change has been made in the arrangement of five other plays; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Cymbeline*; but the variation is not more than a period of two or three years.

us, adds support to the supposition that it was one of his early productions. The last four lines of this comedy furnish an example of the measure I allude to :

“ 'Twas I won the wager, though you hit the white,
“ And being a winner, God give you good night.
“ Now go thy ways, thou hast tam'd a curst shrew,
“ 'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tam'd so.”

Another proof of *The Taming of the Shrew* being an early production arises from the frequent play of words which we find in it, and which Shakspeare has condemned in a subsequent comedy.

Some of the incidents in this comedy are taken from the *Supposes* of Gascoigne, an author of considerable popularity, when Shakspeare first began to write for the stage.

The old piece entitled *The Taming of a Shrew*, on which our author's play is founded, was entered on the Stationers' books by Peter Short, May 2, 1594, and probably soon afterwards printed. As it bore nearly the same title with Shakspeare's play, (which was not printed till 1623,) the hope of getting a sale for it under the shelter of a celebrated name, was probably the inducement to issue it out at that time; and its entry at Stationers' hall, and publication in 1594, (for from the passage quoted below it must have been published,⁸) gives weight to the supposition that Shakspeare's play was writ-

⁸ From a passage in a tract written by Sir John Harrington, entitled *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, 1596, this old play appears to have been printed before that time, probably in the year 1594, when it was entered at Stationers' hall; though no edition of so early a date has hitherto been discovered. “*Read*” (says Sir John) “the booke of *Taming a Shrew*, which hath made a number of us so perfect, that now every one can rule a shrew in our country, save he that hath her.”

ten and first acted in that year. There being no edition of the genuine play in print, the bookseller hoped that the old piece with a similar title might pass on the common reader for Shakspeare's performance. This appears to have been a frequent practice of the booksellers in those days; for Rowley's play of *King Henry VIII.* I am persuaded, was published in 1605, and 1613, with the same view; as were *King Leir and his Three Daughters* in 1605, and Lord Sterline's *Julius Cæsar* in 1607.

In the year 1607 it is highly probable that this comedy of our author's was revived, for in that year Nicholas Ling republished *The old Taming of a Shrew*, with the same intent, as it should seem, with which that piece had originally been issued out by another bookseller in 1594. In the entry made by Ling in the Stationers' books, January 22, 1606-7, he joined with this old drama two of Shakspeare's genuine plays, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, neither of which he ever published, nor does his name appear in the title page of any one of our author's performances: so that those two plays could only have been set down by him, along with the other, with some fraudulent intent.

In the same year also, (Nov. 17) our author's genuine play was entered at Stationers hall by J. Smethwyck⁹ (one of the proprietors of the second folio); which circumstance gives additional weight to the supposition that the play was *revived* in that year. Smethwyck had probably procured a copy of it, and had then thoughts of printing it, though for some reason, now undiscoverable, it was not printed

⁹ For this bookseller *Romeo and Juliet* was printed in 4to. in 1609, and an edition of *Hamlet* without date; the latter was printed either in that year or 1607.

by him till 1631, eight years after it had appeared in the edition by the players in folio.

It should be observed that there is a slight variation between the titles of the anonymous play and Shakspeare's piece; both of which, in consequence of the inaccuracy of Mr. Pope, and his being very superficially acquainted with the phraseology and manner of our early writers, were for a long time unjustly attributed to our poet. The old drama was called *The Taming of a Shrew*; Shakspeare's comedy, *The Taming of the Shrew*.

It must not be concealed, however, that *The Taming of the Shrew* is not enumerated among our author's plays by Meres in 1598; a circumstance which yet is not sufficient to prove that it was not then written: for neither is *Hamlet* nor *The Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI.* mentioned by him; though those three plays had undoubtedly appeared before that year.

I formerly imagined that a line² in this comedy alluded to an old play written by Thomas Heywood, entitled *A Woman kill'd with kindness*, of which the second edition was printed in 1607, and the first probably not before the year 1600; but the other proofs which I have already stated with respect to the date of the play before us, have convinced me that I was mistaken.

7. LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST, 1594.

Shakspeare's natural disposition leading him, as Dr. Johnson has observed, to comedy, it is highly

² "This is the way to kill a wife with kindness." *Taming of the Shrew*, Act IV. sc. i. Heywood's play is mentioned in *The Black Booke*, 4to. 1604. I am not possessed of the first edition of it, nor is it in any of the great collections of old plays that I have seen.

probable that his first *original* dramattick production was of the comick kind: and of his comedies *Love's Labour's Lost* appears to me to bear strong marks of having been one of his earliest essays. The frequent rhymes with which it abounds,³ of which, in his early performances he seems to have been extremely fond, its imperfect versification, its artless and desultory dialogue, and the irregularity of the composition, may be all urged in support of this conjecture.

Love's Labour's Lost was not entered at Stationers' hall till the 22d of January, 1606-7, but is mentioned by Francis Meres,⁴ in his *Wit's Treasury*,

³ As this circumstance is more than once mentioned, in the course of these observations, it may not be improper to add a few words on the subject of our author's metre. A mixture of rhymes with blank verse, in the same play, and sometimes in the same scene, is found in almost all his pieces, and is not peculiar to Shakspeare, being also found in the works of Jonson, and almost all our ancient dramattick writers. It is not, therefore, merely the use of rhymes, mingled with blank verse, but their *frequency*, that is here urged, as a circumstance which seems to characterize and distinguish our poet's earliest performances. In the whole number of pieces which were written antecedent to the year 1600, and which, for the sake of perspicuity, have been called his *early compositions*, more rhyming couplets are found, than in all the plays composed subsequently to that year, which have been named his *late productions*. Whether in process of time Shakspeare grew weary of the bondage of rhyme, or whether he became convinced of its impropriety in a dramattick dialogue, his neglect of rhyming (for he never wholly disused it) seems to have been *gradual*. As, therefore, most of his early productions are characterized by the multitude of similar terminations which they exhibit, whenever of two early pieces it is doubtful which preceded the other, I am disposed to believe, (other proofs being wanting,) that play in which the greater number of rhymes is found, to have been first composed. The plays founded on the story of King Henry VI. do not indeed abound in rhymes; but this probably arose from their being *originally* constructed by preceding writers.

⁴ This writer, to whose list of our author's plays we are so much

being the *Second Part of Wit's Commonwealth*,⁵ in 1598, and was printed in that year. In the title-page of this edition, (the oldest hitherto discovered,) this piece is said to have been *presented before her highness [Queen Elizabeth] the last Christmas, [1597,]* and to be *newly corrected and augmented*: from which it should seem, either that there had been a former impression, or that the play had been originally represented in a less perfect state, than that in which it appears at present.

I think it probable that our author's first draft of this play was written in or before 1594; and that some additions were made to it between that year and 1597, when it was exhibited before the Queen. One of those additions may have been the passage which seems to allude to *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, by Sir John Harrington, printed in 1596: "Your lion—will be given to *A-jax*."⁶ This, however, is not certain; for the conceit of *A-jax* and *a jakes* may not have originated with Harrington, and may hereafter be found in some more ancient tract.

In this comedy Don Armado says,—“The *first* and *second* cause will not serve my turn: the *passado*

indebted, appears, from the following passage of the work here mentioned, to have been personally acquainted with Shakspeare:

“As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakspeare. Witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred *Sonnets* among his private friends,” &c. *Wit's Treasury*, p. 282. There is no edition of Shakspeare's *Sonnets*, now extant, of so early a date as 1598, when Meres's book was printed; so that we may conclude, he was one of those friends to whom they were privately recited, before their publication.

⁵ This book was probably published in the latter end of the year 1598; for it was not entered at Stationers' hall till September in that year.

⁶ See Vol. V. p. 354, n. 9.

he respects not, the *duello* he regards not: his disgrace is to be called boy; but his glory is to subdue man." Shakspeare seems here to have had in his thoughts Saviolo's treatise *Of Honour and honourable Quarrels*, published in 1595.⁷ This passage also may have been an addition.

Banks's horse, which is mentioned in the play before us, had been exhibited in London in or before 1589, as appears from a story recorded in Tarlton's *Jests*.⁸

In this comedy there is more attempt at delineation of character than in either *The Comedy of Errors* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; a circumstance which inclines me to think that it was written subsequently to those plays. Biron and Catharine, as Mr. Steevens, I think, has observed, are faint prototypes of Benedick and Beatrice.

⁷ See a note on *As you like it*, Vol. VI. p. 164, n. 4.

⁸ "There was one Banks in the time of Tarlton, who served the Earl of Essex, and had a horse of strange qualities; and being at the Cross Keyes in Gracious-streete, getting money with him, as he was mightily resorted to, Tarlton then (with his fellowes) playing at the Bell [*f. Bull*] by, came into the Cross keyes, amongst many people to see fashions: which Banks perceiving, to make the people laugh, saies, Signior, to his horse, *go fetch me the veriest foole in the company*. The jade comes immediately, and with his mouth drawes Tarlton forth. Tarlton, with merry words, said nothing but *God a-mercy, horse*. In the end Tarlton seeing the people laugh so, was angry inwardly, and said, Sir, *had I power of your horse, as you have, I would do more than that*. Whate'er it be, said Banks, to please him, *I will charge him to do it*. Then, saies Tarlton, *charge him to bring me the veriest whore-master in the company*. He shall, saies Banks. Signior, saies he, *bring Master Tarlton the veriest whoremaster in the company*. The horse leads his master to him. Then *God-a-mercy, horse*, indeed saies Tarleton. The people had much ado to keep peace: but Banks and Tarleton had like to have squared, and the horse by, to give aime. But ever after it was a by word thorow London, *God-a-mercy, horse!* and is to this day." Tarleton's *Jests*, 4to. 1611.—Tarleton died in 1589.

The doggrel verses in this piece, like those in *The Comedy of Errors*, are longer and more hobbling than those which have been quoted from *The Taming of the Shrew*:

“ You two are bookmen; can you tell by your wit
 “ What was a month old at Cain's birth, that's not five
 weeks old as yet? ”—
 “ O' my truth most sweet jests! most incony vulgar wit,
 “ When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely as it were,
 so fit,” &c.

This play is mentioned in a mean poem intituled *Alba, the Months Minde of a melancholy Lover*, by R. T. Gentleman, printed in 1598:

“ *Love's Labour Lost* I once did see, a play
 “ Y-cleped so, so called to my paine,
 “ Which I to heare to my small joy did stay,
 “ Giving attendance to my froward dame:
 “ My misgiving mind presaging to me ill,
 “ Yet was I drawne to see it 'gainst my will.

* * * * *

“ Each actor plaid in cunning wise his part,
 “ But chiefly those entrapt in Cupid's snare;
 “ Yet all was fained, 'twas not from the hart,
 “ They seeme to grieve, but yet they felt no care:
 “ 'Twas I that griepe indeed did beare in brest,
 “ The others did but make a shew in jest.”

Mr. Gildon, in his observations on *Love's Labour's Lost*, says, he “ cannot see why the author gave it this name.”—The following lines exhibit the train of thoughts which probably suggested to Shakspeare this title, as well as that which anciently was affixed to another of his comedies,—*Love's Labour Won*:

“ To be *in love*, where scorn is bought with groans,
 “ Coy looks with heart-fore sighs; one fading moment's
 mirth

“ With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights :

“ If haply *won*, perhaps a hapless gain ;

“ If *lost*, why then a grievous *labour won*.”

Two Gentlemen of Verona. Act I. sc. i.

8. TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, 1595.

This comedy was not entered on the books of the Stationers' Company till 1623, at which time it was first printed ; but is mentioned by Meres in 1598, and bears strong internal marks of an early composition. The comick parts of it are of the same colour with the comick parts of *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ; and the serious scenes are eminently distinguished by that elegant and pastoral simplicity which might be expected from the early effusions of such a mind as Shakspeare's, when employed in describing the effects of love. In this piece also, as in *The Comedy of Errors* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, some alternate verses are found.

Sir William Blackstone concurs with me in opinion on this subject ; observing, that “ one of the great faults of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is the hastening too abruptly and without preparation to the denouëment, which shews that it was one of Shakspeare's very early performances.”

The following lines in Act I. sc. iii. have induced me to ascribe this play to the year 1595 :

“ ——— He wonder'd, that your lordship

“ Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,

“ While other men, of slender reputation,

“ Put forth their sons to seek preferment out :

“ *Some to the wars, to try their fortunes there,*

“ *Some, to discover islands far away.*”

Shakspeare, as has been often observed, gives to almost every country the manners of his own : and

though the speaker is here a Veronese, the poet, when he wrote the last two lines, was thinking of England; where voyages for the purpose of *discovering islands far away* were at this time much prosecuted. In 1595, Sir Walter Rawleigh undertook a voyage to the island of Trinidad, from which he made an expedition up the river Orinoque, to discover Guiana. Sir Humphry Gilbert had gone on a similar voyage of discovery the preceding year.

The particular situation of England in 1595 may have suggested the line above quoted: "Some to the wars, &c. In that year it was generally believed that the Spaniards meditated a second invasion of England with a much more powerful and better appointed Armada than that which had been defeated in 1588. Soldiers were levied with great diligence, and placed on the sea-coasts, and two great fleets were equipped; one to encounter the enemy in the British seas; the other to sail to the West-Indies, under the command of Hawkins and Drake, to attack the Spaniards in their own territories. About the same time also Elizabeth sent a considerable body of troops to the assistance of King Henry IV. of France, who had entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the English Queen, and had newly declared war against Spain. Our author therefore, we see, had abundant reason for both the lines before us:

"Some to the wars, to try their fortunes there,

"Some to discover islands far away."

Among the marks of love, Speed in this play (Act II. sc. i.) enumerates the walking alone, "like one that had the pestilence." In the year 1593 there had been a great plague, which carried off

near eleven thousand persons in London. Shakspeare was undoubtedly there at that time, and his own recollection probably furnished him with this image. There had not been a great plague in the metropolis, if I remember right, since that of 1564, of which our poet could have no personal knowledge, having been born in that year.

Valentinus putting himself at the head of a band of outlaws in this piece, has been supposed to be copied from Sydney's *Arcadia*, where Pylades heads the Helots. The first edition of the *Arcadia* was in 1590.

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* there are two allusions to the story of Hero and Leander, which I suspect Shakspeare had read recently before he composed this play. Marlowe's poem on that subject was entered at Stationers' hall, Sept. 18, 1593, and I believe was published in that or the following year, though I have met with no copy earlier than that printed in quarto in 1598. Though that should have been the first edition, Shakspeare might yet have read this poem soon after the author's death in 1593: for Marlowe's fame was deservedly so high, that a piece left by him for publication was probably handed about in manuscript among his theatrical acquaintances antecedent to its being issued from the press.

In the following lines of this play,

“ Why, Phaeton, (for thou art Merops' son,)
 “ Wilt thou aspire to guide the heavenly car,
 “ And with thy daring folly burn the world ?”

the poet, as Mr. Steevens has observed, might have been furnished with his mythology by the old play of *King John*, in two parts, 4to. 1591:

“ ————— as sometimes *Phaeton*,
 “ Mistrusting filly *Merops* for his fire.”

If I am right in supposing our author's *King John* to have been written in 1596, it is not improbable that he read the old play with particular attention antecedently to his sitting down to compose a new drama on the subject; perhaps in the preceding year: and this circumstance may add some weight to the date now assigned to the play before us,

9. ROMEO AND JULIET, 1595.

It has been already observed, that our author in his early plays appears to have been much addicted to rhyming; a practice from which he gradually departed, though he never wholly deserted it. In this piece *more* rhymes, I believe, are found, than in any other of his plays, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* only excepted. This circumstance, the story on which it is founded, so likely to captivate a young poet, the imperfect form in which it originally appeared, and its very early publication,⁹ all incline me to believe that this was Shakspeare's first tragedy; for the three parts of *King Henry VI.* do not pretend to that title.

"A new ballad of *Romeo and Juliet*" (perhaps our author's play,) was entered on the Stationers' books, August 5, 1596,² and the first sketch of the

⁹ There is no edition of any of our author's genuine plays extant, prior to 1597, when *Romeo and Juliet* was published,

² There is no entry in the Stationers' books relative to the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*, antecedent to its publication in 1597, if this does not relate to it. This entry was made by Edward Whyte, and therefore is not likely to have related to the poem called *Romeo and Julietta*, which was entered in 1582, by Richard Tottel. How vague the description of plays was at this time, may appear

play was printed in 1597; but it did not appear in its present form till two years afterwards.

This tragedy was originally represented by the servants of Lord Hunsdon, who was appointed Lord Chamberlain to Queen Elizabeth in 1585, and died in July 1596. As it appears from the title-page of the original edition in 1597, that *Romeo and Juliet* had been often acted by the servants of that nobleman, it probably had been represented in the preceding year.

In the third act *the first and second cause* are mentioned: that passage therefore was probably written after the publication of Saviolo's Book on *Honour and honourable quarrels*; which appeared in 1595.

From several passages in the fifth act of this tragedy it is manifest, I think, that Shakspeare had recently read, and remembered, some of the lines in Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond*, which, I believe, was printed in 1592:³ the earliest edition, how-

from the following entry, which is found in the Stationers' books, an. 1590, and seems to relate to Marlowe's *tragedy* of Tamburlaine, published in that year, by Richard Jones.

“ To Richard Jones] Twoe Commical *Discourses* of Tamburlein, the Cythian Shepparde.”

In Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, as originally performed, several comick interludes were introduced; whence perhaps, the epithet *comical* was added to the title.—As tragedies were sometimes entitled *discourses*, so a grave poem or *sad discourse*, in verse, (to use the language of the time) was frequently denominated a *tragedy*. All the poems inserted in the *Mirroure for Magistrates*, and some of Drayton's pieces, are called *tragedies*, by Meres and other ancient writers. Some of Sir David Lindsay's poems, though not in a dramattick form, are also by their author entitled *tragedies*.

³ “ A booke called *Delia*, containynge diverse sonates, with the *Complainte of Rosamonde*,” was entered at Stationers-hall by Simon Waterston in Feb. 1591-2, and the latter piece is commended by Nashe in a tract entitled *Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Diuell*, published in 1592.

ever, that I have seen of that piece is dated in 1594:

" And nought-respecting death, the last of paines,
 " Plac'd his *pale colours*, (the *ensign* of his might,)
 " Upon his new-got spoil," &c. *Complaint of Rosamond.*

" ——— beauty's *ensign* yet
 " Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
 " And *death's pale flag*," &c. *Romeo and Juliet.*

" Decayed roses of discolour'd cheeks
 " Do yet retain some notes of former grace,
 " And *ugly death sits faire within her face.*"
Complaint of Rosamond.

" Death that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
 " Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty."
Romeo and Juliet.

" Ah now methinks I see *death dallying seeks*
 " *To entertaine itselfe in love's sweet place.*"
Complaint of Rosamond.

" ——— Shall I believe
 " That unsubstantial *death is amorous?*"
Romeo and Juliet.

If the following passage in an old comedy already mentioned, entitled *Doctor Dodipoll*, which had appeared before 1596, be considered as an imitation, it may add some weight to the supposition that *Romeo and Juliet* had been exhibited before that year:

" The glorious parts of fair Lucilia,
 " Take them and join them in the heavenly spheres,
 " And fix them there as an eternal light,
 " For lovers to adore and wonder at." *Dr. Dodipoll.*

" Take him and cut him out in little stars,
 " And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
 " That all the world shall be in love with night,
 " And pay no worship to the garish sun."
Romeo and Juliet.

In the fifth act of this tragedy mention is made of the practice of sealing up the doors of those

houses in which "the infectious pestilence did reign." Shakspeare probably had himself seen this practised in the plague which raged in London in 1593.

From a speech of the Nurse in this play, which contains these words—" *It is now since the earthquake eleven years,*" &c. Mr. Tyrwhitt conjectured, that *Romeo and Juliet*, or at least part of it, was written in 1591; the novels from which Shakspeare may be supposed to have drawn his story, not mentioning any such circumstance; while on the other hand, there actually was an earthquake in England on the 6th of April 1580, which he might here have had in view.⁴—It formerly seemed improbable to me that Shakspeare, when he was writing this tragedy, should have adverted, with such precision, to the date of an earthquake which had been felt in his youth. The passage quoted struck me, as only displaying one of those characteristic traits, which distinguish old people of the lower class; who delight in enumerating a multitude of minute circumstances that have no relation to the business immediately under their consideration,⁵ and are particularly fond of computing time from extraordinary events, such as battles, comets, plagues, and earthquakes. This feature of their character our author has in various places strongly marked. Thus (to mention one of many instances,) the Grave-digger in *Hamlet* says

⁴ See *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I. sc. iii.

⁵ Thus Mrs. Quickly in *King Henry IV.* reminds Falstaff, that he "swore on a parcel-gilt goblet, to marry her, sitting in her dolphin chamber, at a round table, by a sea-coal fire, on Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when the prince broke his head for likening his father to a singing man of Windsor."

that he came to his employment, "of all the days i'the year, that day that the last king *o'ercame Fortinbras*,—that very day that young *Hamlet* was born."—A more attentive perusal, however, of our poet's works, and his frequent allusions to the manners and usages of England, and to the events of his own time, which he has described as taking place wherever his scene happens to lie, have shewn me that Mr. Tyrwhitt's conjecture is not so improbable as I once supposed it. Shakspeare might have laid the foundation of this play in 1591, and finished it at a subsequent period. The passage alluded to is in the *first* act.

If the earthquake which happened in England in 1580, was in his thoughts, when he composed the first part of this play, and induced him to state the earthquake at Verona as happening on the day on which Juliet was *weaned*, and *eleven* years before the commencement of the piece, it has led him into a contradiction; for according to the Nurse's account Juliet was within a fortnight and odd days of completing her *fourteenth* year; and yet according to the computation made she could not well be much more than *twelve* years old. Whether indeed the English earthquake was, or was not, in his thoughts, the nurse's account is inconsistent, and contradictory.

Perhaps Shakspeare was more careful to mark the garrulity, than the precision, of the old woman:—or perhaps, he meant this very incorrectness as a trait of her character:—or, without having recourse to either of these suppositions, shall we say, that our author was here, as in some other places, hasty and inattentive? It is certain that there is nothing in which he is less accurate, than the computation of time. Of his negligence in this

respect, *As you Like it*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Othello*, furnish remarkable instances.⁶

10. HAMLET, 1596.

The following passage is found in *An Epistle to the Gentlemen Students of the Two Universities* by Thomas Nashe, prefixed to Greene's *Arcadia*, which was published in 1589: "I will turn back to my first text of studies of delight, and talk a little in friendship with a few of our trivial translators. It is a common practice now a-days, among a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every art, and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint*, whereto they were born, and busie themselves with the endeavors of art, that could scarcely latinize their neck-verse if they should have neede; yet English *Seneca*, read by candle-light, yeelds many good sentences, as *Bloud is a beggar*, and so forth: and, if you intreat him faire in a frosty morning, he will affoord you whole *Hamlets*, I should say, *Handfuls*, of tragical speeches. But O grief! *Tempus edax rerum*;—what is that will last always? The sea exhaled by drops will in continuance be drie; and *Seneca*, let bloud line by line, and page by page, at length must needes die to our stage."

Not having seen the first edition of this tract till a few years ago, I formerly doubted whether the foregoing passage referred to the tragedy of *Hamlet*; but the word *Hamlets* being printed in the original copy in a different character from the rest, I have no longer any doubt upon the subject.

⁶ See *Measure for Measure*, Act I. sc. iii. and iv.—*As you like it*, Act IV. sc. i. and iii.—*Othello*, Act III, sc. iii: "I slept the next night well," &c.

It is manifest from this passage that some play on the story of *Hamlet* had been exhibited before the year 1589; but I am inclined to think that it was not Shakspeare's drama, but an elder performance, on which, with the aid of the old prose History of Hamlet, his tragedy was formed. The great number of pieces which we *know* he formed on the performances of preceding writers,⁷ renders it highly probable that some others also of his dramas were constructed on plays that are now lost. Perhaps the original *Hamlet* was written by Thomas Kyd; who was the author of one play (and probably of more) to which no name is affixed.⁸ The only tragedy to which Kyd's name is affixed, (*Cornelia*,) is a professed *translation* from the French of Garnier, who, as well as his translator, imitated Seneca. In Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, as in Shakspeare's *Hamlet*, there is, if I may say so, a play represented *within a play*: if the old play of *Hamlet* should ever be recovered, a similar interlude, I make no doubt, would be found there; and somewhat of the same contrivance may be traced in *The old Taming of a Shrew*, a comedy which perhaps had the same author as the other ancient pieces now enumerated.

Nashe seems to point at some dramattick writer of that time, who had originally been a scrivener or attorney:

“ A clerk foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,

“ Who *penn'd* a stanza when he should engross;”

who, instead of transcribing deeds and pleadings, chose to imitate Seneca's plays, of which a transla-

⁷ See the Dissertation on the Three Parts of *King Henry VI.* Vol. X. p. 452.

⁸ *The Spanish Tragedy.*

tion had been published many years before. Our author, however freely he may have borrowed from Plutarch and Holinshed, does not appear to be at all indebted to Seneca; and therefore I do not believe that he was the person in Nashe's contemplation. The person alluded to being described as originally bred to the law, (for the trade of *noverint* is the trade of an attorney or conveyancer,⁹) I formerly conceived that this circumstance also was decisive to shew that Shakspeare could not have been aimed at. I do not hesitate to acknowledge, that since the first edition of this essay I have found reason to believe that I was mistaken. The comprehensive mind of our poet embraced almost every object of nature, every trade, every art; the manners of every description of men, and the general language of almost every profession: but his knowledge of legal terms is not merely such as might be acquired by the casual observation of even his all-comprehending mind; it has the appearance of *technical* skill; and he is so fond of displaying it on all occasions, that I suspect he was early initiated in at least the forms of law; and was employed, while he yet remained at Stratford, in the office of some country attorney, who was at the same time a petty conveyancer, and perhaps also the Seneschal of some manor court. I shall subjoin the proofs below.²

⁹ "The country lawyers too jog down apace,

"Each with his *noverint universi* face."

Ravencroft's Prologue prefixed to *Titus Andronicus*. Our ancient deeds were written in Latin, and frequently began with the words, *Noverint Universi*. The form is still retained. *Know all men, &c.*

² " ——— for what in me was purchas'd,

"Falls upon thee in a much fairer sort."

King Henry IV. P. II.

The tragedy of *Hamlet* was not registered in the books of the Stationers' Company till the 26th of

Purchase is here used in its strict legal sense, in contradistinction to an acquisition by *descent*.

"Unless the devil have him in fee-simple, with fine and recovery." *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

"He is 'rested on the case." *Comedy of Errors*.

"—— with bills on their necks, Be it known unto all men by these presents," &c. *As you like it*.

"—— who writes himself armigero, in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation." *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

"Go with me to a notary, seal me there

"Your single bond." *Merchant of Venice*.

"Say, for non-payment that the debt should double."

Venus and Adonis.

On a conditional bond's becoming forfeited for non-payment of money borrowed, the whole penalty, which is usually the double of the principal sum lent by the obligee, was formerly recoverable at law. To this our poet here alludes.

"But the defendant doth that plea deny;

"To 'cide his title, is impannelled

"A quest of thoughts." *Sonnet 46*.

In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Dogberry charges the watch to keep their fellows' counsel and their own. This Shakspeare transferred from the oath of a grand jurymen.

"And let my officers of such a nature

"Make an extent upon his house and lands."

As you like it.

"He was taken with the manner." *Love's Labour's Lost*.

"Enfeof'd himself to popularity." *King Henry IV. P. I.*

"He will seal the fee-simple of his salvation, and cut the entail from all remainders, and a perpetual succession for it perpetually."

All's well that ends well.

"Why, let her except before excepted." *Twelfth Night*.

"—— which is four terms, or two actions;—and he shall laugh without intervallums." *King Henry IV. P. II.*

"—— keeps leets and law-days." *King Richard II.*

"Pray in aid for kindness." *Antony and Cleopatra*.

No writer but one who had been conversant with the technical language of leases and other conveyances, would have used *determination* as synonymous to *end*. Shakspeare frequently uses the word in that sense. See Vol. — n. —; Vol. IX. p. 630, n. 7; and [Mr. Malone's edit.] Vol. X. p. 202, n. 8. "From and after the determination of such term," is the regular language of conveyancers.

July, 1602. I believe it was then published, though the earliest copy now extant is dated in 1604. In the title-page of that copy, the play is said to be "*newly* imprinted, and enlarged to almost as much again *as it was*, according to the true and perfect copy;" from which words it is manifest that a former *less perfect* copy had been issued from the press.

In a tract entitled *Wits Miserie or the World's Madnesse, discovering the incarnate Devils of the Age*, by Thomas Lodge, which was published in quarto in 1596, one of the devils (as Dr. Farmer has observed) is said to be "a foule lubber, and looks as pale as the vizard of the *ghost*, who cried so miserably at the theatre, *Hamlet, revenge.*" If the allusion was to our author's tragedy, this passage will ascertain its appearance in or before 1596; but

"Humbly complaining to your highness."

King Richard III.

"Humbly complaining to your lordship, your orator," &c. are the first words of every bill in chancery.

"A kifs in fee farm! In witness whereof these parties interchangeably have set their hands and seals." *Troilus and Cressida.*

"Art thou a *feodary* for this act?" *Cymbeline.*

See the note on that passage, Vol. XIII. p. 103, 104, n. 3.

"Are those *precepts* served?" says Shallow to Davy, in *King Henry IV.*

Precepts in this sense is a word only known in the office of a Justice of peace.

"Tell me, what state, what dignity, what honour,

"Can'st thou *demise* to any child of mine?"

King Richard III.

"—— hath *demised*, granted, and to farm let," is the constant language of leases. What poet but Shakspeare has used the word *demised* in this sense?

Perhaps it may be said, that our author in the same manner may be proved to have been equally conversant with the terms of divinity, or physick. Whenever as large a number of instances of his ecclesiastical or medicinal knowledge shall be produced, what has now been stated will certainly not be entitled to any weight.

Lodge may have had the elder play in his contemplation. We *know* however from the testimony of Dr. Gabriel Harvey, that Shakspeare's *Hamlet* had been exhibited before 1598.³

The Case is altered, a comedy, attributed to Ben Jonson, and written before the end of the year 1599,⁴ contains a passage, which seems to me to have a reference to this play:

“*Angelo.* But first I'll *play the ghost*; I'll call him out.”⁵

In the second act of *Hamlet*, a contest between the singing boys of St. Paul's,⁶ and the actors of the established theatres, is alluded to. At what time that contest began, is uncertain. But, should it appear not to have commenced till some years after the date here assigned, it would not, I apprehend, be a sufficient reason for ascribing this play to a later period; for, as additions appear to have been made to it after its first production, and we have some authority for attributing the first sketch of it to 1596, or to an earlier period, till that authority is shaken, we may presume, that

³ See Vol. X. [Mr. Malone's edition] p. 71.

⁴ This comedy was not printed till 1609, but it had appeared many years before. The time when it was written, is ascertained with great precision by the following circumstances. It contains an allusion to Meres's *Wit's Treasury*, first printed in the latter end of the year 1598, (See p. 511, n. 5,) and is itself mentioned by Nashe in his *Lenten Stuff*, 4to. 1599.—“It is right of the merry cobbler's stuff, in that witty play of *The Case is altered*.”

⁵ Jonson's works, Vol. VII. p. 362. Whalley's edit.

⁶ Between the years 1595 and 1600, some of Lilly's comedies were performed by these children. Many of the plays of Jonson were represented by them between 1600 and 1609.—From a passage in *Jack Drum's Entertainment, or the Comedy of Pasquil and Catharine*, which was printed in 1601, we learn that they were much followed at that time.

any passage which is inconsistent with that date, was not in the play originally, but a subsequent insertion.

With respect to the allusion in question, it probably was an addition; for it is not found in the quarto of 1604, (which has not the appearance of a mutilated or imperfect copy,) nor did it appear in print till the publication of the folio in 1623.

The same observation may be made on the passage produced by Mr. Holt, to prove that this play was not written till after 1597. "*Their inhibition comes by means of the late innovation.*" This indeed, does appear in the quarto of 1604, but, we may presume, was added in the interval between 1597, (when the statute alluded to, 39 Eliz. ch. 4. was enacted,) and that year.

Heywood in his *Apology for Actors*, 1612, complains of the *scurrility* introduced *lately* by the younger brood of players, in their theatrical exhibitions. This may serve to ascertain the time when the passage which relates to them was inserted in *Hamlet*.

II. KING JOHN, 1596.

This historical play was founded on a former drama, entitled *The Troublesome Raigne of John King of England, with the Discoverie of King Richard Cordelion's base Son, vulgarly named the Bastard Fawconbridge: also the Death of King John at Swinestead Abbey. As it was (sundry times) publikely acted by the Queenes Majesties Players in the honourable Citie of London.* This piece, which is in two parts, and was printed at London for Sampson Clarke, 1591, has no author's name in the title-page. On its republication in 1611, the bookseller for whom

it was printed, inserted the letters *W. Sb.* in the title-page; and in order to conceal his fraud, omitted the words—*publikely—in the honourable Citie of London*, which he was aware would proclaim this play not to be Shakspeare's *King John*; the company to which he belonged, having no *publick* theatre in London: that in Blackfriars being a private play-house, and the Globe, which was a publick theatre, being situated in Southwark. He also, probably with the same view, omitted the following lines addressed *to the Gentlemen Readers*, which are prefixed to the first edition of the old play:

“ You that with friendly grace of smoothed brow
 “ Have entertain'd *the Scythian Tamburlaine*,
 “ And given applause unto an infidel;
 “ Vouchsafe to welcome, with like curtesie,
 “ A warlike Christian and your countryman.
 “ For Christ's true faith indur'd he many a storme,
 “ And set himselfe against the man of *Rome*,
 “ Until base treason by a damned wight
 “ Did all his former triumphs put to flight.
 “ Accept of it, sweete gentles, in good sort,
 “ And thinke it was prepar'd for your disport.”

Shakspeare's play being then probably often acted, and the other wholly laid aside, the word *lately* was substituted for the word *publickly*:
 “ — as they were sundry times *lately* acted,” &c.

Thomas Dewe, for whom a third edition of this old play was printed in 1622, was more daring. The two parts were then published, “ *as they were sundry times lately acted* ;” and the name of *William Shakspeare* inserted at length. *By the Queen's Majesties players* was wisely omitted, as not being very consistent with the word *lately*, Elizabeth being then dead nineteen years.

King John is the only one of our poet's uncontested plays that is not entered in the books of the

Stationers' company. It was not printed till 1623, but is mentioned by Meres in 1598, unless he mistook the old play in two parts, printed in 1591, for the composition of Shakspeare.

It is observable that our author's son, Hamnet, died in August, 1596. That a man of such sensibility, and of so amiable a disposition, should have lost his only son, who had attained the age of twelve years, without being greatly affected by it, will not be easily credited. The pathetick lamentations which he has written for Lady Constance on the death of Arthur, may perhaps add some probability to the supposition that this tragedy was written at or soon after that period.

In the first scene of the second act the following lines are spoken by Chatillon, the French ambassador, on his return from England to King Philip:

- " And all the unsettled humours of the land—
- " Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,
- " With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,—
- " Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,
- " Bearing their birth-rights proudly on their backs,
- " To make a hazard of new fortunes here.
- " In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits
- " Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er,
- " Did never float upon the swelling tide,
- " To do offence and scathe to Christendom."

Dr. Johnson has justly observed in a note on this play, that many passages in our poet's works evidently shew that " he often took advantage of the facts then recent, and the passions then in motion." Perhaps the description contained in the last six lines was immediately suggested to Shakspeare by the grand fleet which was sent against Spain in 1596. It consisted of eighteen of the largest of the Queen's ships, three of the Lord Admiral's, and above one

hundred and twenty merchant-ships and victuallers, under the command of the earls of Nottingham and Effex. The regular land-forces on board amounted to ten thousand; and there was also a large body of *voluntaries* (as they were then called) under the command of Sir Edward Winkfield. Many of the nobility went on this expedition, which was destined against Cadiz. The fleet sailed from Plymouth on the third of June, 1596; before the end of that month the great Spanish armada was destroyed, and the town of Cadiz was sacked and burned. Here Lord Effex found 1200 pieces of ordnance, and an immense quantity of treasure, stores, ammunition, &c. valued at twenty million of ducats. The victorious commanders of this successful expedition returned to Plymouth, August 8, 1596, four days before the death of our poet's son. Many of our old historians speak of the splendor and magnificence displayed by the noble and gallant adventurers who served in this expedition; and Ben Jonson has particularly alluded to it in his *Silent Woman*, written a few years afterwards.⁷ To this I suspect two lines already quoted particularly refer:

“ Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,
 “ *Bearing their birth-rights proudly on their backs.*”

Dr. Johnson conceived that the following lines in this play—

“ And meritorious shall that hand be call'd,
 “ Canonized, and worshipp'd as a saint,
 “ That takes away by any secret course
 “ Thy hateful life.”

might either refer to the bull published against

⁷ “ I had as fair a *gold jerkin* on that day as any was worn in the Island Voyage, or Cadiz, none dispraised,” *Silent Woman*, 1609.

Queen Elizabeth, or to the canonization of Garnet, Faux, and their accomplices, who in a Spanish book which he had seen, are registered as saints. If the latter allusion had been intended, then this play, or at least this part of it, must have been written after 1605. But the passage in question is founded on a similar one in the old play, printed in 1591, and therefore no allusion to the gun-powder-plot could have been intended.

A line of *The Spanish Tragedy* is quoted in *King John*. That tragedy, I believe, had appeared in or before 1590.

In the first act of *King John*, an ancient tragedy, entitled *Solyman and Perseda*, is alluded to. The earliest edition of that play, now extant, is that of 1599, but it was written, and probably acted, many years before; for it was entered on the Stationers' books, by Edward Whyte, Nov. 20, 1592.

Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, which, according to Langbaine, was printed in 1603, contains a passage, which, if it should be considered as an imitation of a similar one in *King John*, will ascertain this historical drama to have been written at least before that year:

“ Then how much more in me, whose youthful veins,
“ *Like a proud river, overflow their bounds.*”

So, in *King John*:

“ Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,
“ *Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds.*”

Marston has in many other places imitated Shakspeare.

A speech spoken by the bastard in the second act of this tragedy⁸ seems to have been formed on one

⁸ See Vol. VIII. p. 58.

in an old play entitled *The famous History of Captain Thomas Stukely*. Captain Stukely was killed in 1578. The drama of which he is the subject, was not printed till 1605, but it is in the black letter, and, I believe, had been exhibited at least fifteen years before.

Of the only other note of time which I have observed in this tragedy, beside those already mentioned, I am unable to make any use. "When I was in *France*," says young Arthur,

"Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
"Only for wantonness."

I have not been able to ascertain when the fashion of being *sad and gentlemanlike* commenced among our gayer neighbours on the continent. A similar fashion prevailed in England, and is often alluded to by our poet, and his contemporaries. Perhaps he has in this instance attributed to the French a species of affectation then only found in England. It is noticed by Lily in 1592, and Ben Jonson in 1598.

12. KING RICHARD II. 1597.

King Richard II. was entered on the Stationers' books, August 29, 1597, and printed in that year.

There had been a former play on this subject, which appears to have been called *King Henry IV.* in which Richard was deposed, and killed on the stage. This piece, as Dr. Farmer and Mr. Tyrwhitt have observed, was performed on a publick theatre, at the request of Sir Gilly Merick, and some other followers of Lord Essex, the afternoon before his insurrection: "so earnest was he,"

(Merick) says the printed account of his arraignment, "to satisfy his eyes with a sight of that tragedy which he thought soone after his lord should bring from the stage to the state." "The players told him the play was *old*, and they should have losse by playing it, because few would come to it; but no play else would serve: and Sir Gilly Merick gave forty shillings to Philips the player to play this, besides whatsoever he could get."⁹

It may seem strange that this old play should have been represented four years after Shakspeare's drama on the same subject had been printed: the reason undoubtedly was, that in the old play the deposing King Richard II. made a part of the exhibition: but in the first edition of our author's play, one hundred and fifty-four lines, describing a kind of trial of the king, and his actual deposition in parliament, were omitted: nor was it probably represented on the stage. Merick, Cuffe, and the rest of Essex's train, naturally preferred the play in which his *deposition* was represented, their plot not aiming at the life of the queen. It is, I know, commonly thought, that the parliament-scene, (as it is called,) which was first printed in the quarto of 1608, was an addition made by Shakspeare to his play after its first representation: but it seems to me more probable that it was written with the rest, and suppressed in the printed copy of 1597, from the fear of offending Elizabeth; against whom the Pope had published a bull in the preceding year, exhorting her subjects to take up arms against her. In 1599 Hayward published his *History of the first Year of Henry IV.* which in fact is nothing more than an history of the deposing Richard II. The displeasure which that book excited at court,

⁹ Bacon's Works, Vol. IV. 412. *State Trials*, Vol. VIII. p. 60.

sufficiently accounts for the omitted lines not being inserted in the copy of this play which was published in 1602. Hayward was heavily censured in the Star-chamber, and committed to prison. At a subsequent period, (1608,) when King James was quietly and firmly settled on the throne, and the fear of internal commotion, or foreign invasion, no longer subsisted, neither the author, the managers of the theatre, nor the bookseller, could entertain any apprehension of giving offence to the sovereign: the rejected scene was restored without scruple, and from some playhouse copy probably found its way to the press.

13. KING RICHARD III. 1597.

Entered, at the Stationers' hall, Oct. 20, 1597.
Printed in that year.

14. FIRST PART OF KING HENRY IV. 1597.

Entered, Feb. 25, 1597. [1597-8.] Written therefore probably in 1597. Printed in 1598.

15. SECOND PART OF KING HENRY IV. 1598.

The Second Part of King Henry IV. was entered in the Stationers' books, August 23, 1600, and was printed in that year. It was written, I believe, in 1598. From the epilogue it appears to have been composed before *King Henry V.* which itself must have been written in or before 1599.

Meres in his *Wit's Treasury*, which was published in September 1598, has given a list of our author's plays, and among them is *King Henry IV.*; but as

he does not describe it as a play in two parts, I doubt whether this second part had been exhibited, though it might have been then written. If it was not in his contemplation, it may be presumed to have appeared in the latter part of the year 1598. His words are these: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy, among the Latines, so Shakspeare, among the English, is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage: for comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love's Labour's Lost*, his *Love's Labour's Wonne*, his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and his *Merchant of Venice*; for tragedy,² his *Richard II.* *Richard III.* *HENRY IV. King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*."³

The following allusion to one of the characters in this play, which is found in *Every Man out of his Humour*, Act V. sc. ii. first acted in 1599, is an additional authority for supposing *The Second Part of King Henry IV.* to have been written in 1598:

"*Savi.* What's he, gentle Monf. Brisk? Not that gentleman?"

"*Fast.* No, lady; this is a kinsman to *Justice Shallow*."

That this play was not written before the year 1596, is ascertained by the following allusions. In the last act Clarence, speaking of his father, says,

"The incessant care and labour of his mind

"Hath wrought the mure, that should confine it in,

"So thin, that life looks through, and will break out."

These lines appear to have been formed on the

² The circumstance of Hotspur's death in this play, and its being an historical drama, I suppose, induced *Meres* to denominate *The First Part of King Henry IV.* a tragedy.

³ *Wit's Treasury*, p. 282.

following in Daniel's *Civil Warres*, 1595, B. III. ft. 116:

“ Wearing the wall so thin, that now the mind
“ Might well look thorough, and his frailty find.”

Daniel's poem, though not published till 1595, was entered on the Stationers' books, in October 1594.

The distich, with which Pistol consoles himself, *Si fortuna me tormenta*, &c. had, I believe, appeared in an old collection of tales, and apothegms, entitled *Wits, Fits, and Fancies*, which was entered at Stationers' hall in 1595, and probably printed in that year. Sir Richard Hawkins, as Dr. Farmer has observed, “ in his voyage to the South Sea in 1593, throws out the same jingling distich on the loss of his pinnace.” But no account of that voyage was published before 1598.

In the last act of this play the young king thus addresses his brothers:

“ Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear.
“ This is the English, not the Turkish court;
“ Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
“ But Harry Harry.”

It is highly probable, as is observed in a note on that passage, that Shakspeare had here in contemplation the cruelty practised by the Turkish emperor, Mahomet, who after the death of his father, Amurath the Third, in Feb. 1596,⁴ invited his unsuspecting brothers to a feast, and caused them all to be strangled.

⁴ The affairs of this court had previously attracted the publick attention; for in 1594 was published at London, *A Letter sent by Amurath the great Turke to Christendom*,

16. THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, 1598.

Entered at the Stationers' hall, July 22, 1598; and mentioned by Meres in that year. Published in 1600.

17. ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, 1598.

All's well that ends well was not registered at Stationers' hall, nor printed till 1623; but has been thought to be the play mentioned by Meres in 1598, under the title of *Love's Labour's Won*. No other of our author's plays could have borne that title with so much propriety as that before us; yet it must be acknowledged that the present title is inserted in the body of the play:

“ *All's well that ends well*; still the fine's the crown,” &c.

This line, however, might certainly have suggested the alteration of what has been thought the first title, and affords no decisive proof that this piece was originally called *All's well that ends well*. The words that compose the present title appear to have been proverbial.⁵

I formerly supposed that a comedy called *A bad Beginning makes a good Ending*, which was acted at court in 1613, by the Company of John Heminge, was the play now under consideration, with only a new title: but I was mistaken. The play then exhibited was written by John Ford.

⁵ See *The Remedie of Love*, translated from Ovid, 1600, Sign. E. 3. b: “ You take the old proverb with a right application for my just excuse: *All is well that ends well*; and so end I.” See also Camden's Proverbial Sentences, *Remains*, 1614.

In *All's well that ends well*, "The shewing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor," is mentioned. If this should prove to be the title of some tract, (which is not improbable,) and the piece should be hereafter discovered, it may serve in some measure to ascertain the date of the play.

This comedy also contains an allusion to the dispute between the Puritans and Protestants concerning the use of the surplice. That dispute began in 1589; and was much agitated during all the remainder of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

"Plutus himself," (says one of the characters in this play,) "That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine," &c.

I know not whether the pursuit of the philosopher's stone particularly engaged the publick attention at the period to which this comedy has been ascribed; and quote the passage only for the consideration of those who are more conversant with that subject.

18. KING HENRY V. 1599.

Mr. Pope thought that this historical drama was one of our author's latest compositions; but he was evidently mistaken. *King Henry V.* was entered on the Stationers' books, Aug. 14, 1600, and printed in the same year. It was written *after* the Second Part of *King Henry IV.* being promised in the epilogue of that play; and while the Earl of Essex was in Ireland.⁶ Lord Essex went to Ireland April 15, 1599, and returned to London on the 28th of September in the same year. So that this play (unless the passage relative to him was inserted

⁶ See the Chorus to the fifth act of *King Henry V.*

after the piece was finished) must have been composed between April and September, 1599. Supposing that passage a subsequent insertion, the play was probably not written *long* before; for it is not mentioned by Meres in 1598.

The prologue to Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*⁷ seems clearly to allude to this play; and, if it had been written at the same time with the piece itself, might induce us, notwithstanding the silence of Meres, to place *King Henry V.* a year or two earlier; for *Every Man in his Humour* is said to have been acted in 1598. But the prologue which now appears before it, was not written till after 1601, when the play was printed without a prologue. It appears to have been Jonson's first performance;⁸ and we may presume that it was the very play, which, we are told, was brought on the stage by the good offices of Shakspeare, who himself acted in it. Malignant and envious as Jonson appears to have been, he hardly would have ridiculed his benefactor at the very time he was so essentially obliged to him. Some years afterwards his jealousy broke out, and vented itself in this prologue, which first appeared in the folio edition of Jonson's Works, published in 1616. It is certain that, not long after the year 1600, a coolness⁹ arose between Shakspeare and him,

- ⁷ "He rather prays, you will be pleased to see
 "One such, to day, as other plays should be;
 "Where neither Chorus wafts you o'er the seas," &c.

Prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*. Fol. 1616.

⁸ Jonson himself tells us in his Induction to *The Magnetick Lady*, that this was his first dramattick performance—"The author beginning his studies of this kind with *Every Man in his Humour*."

⁹ See an old comedy called *The Return from Parnassus*: [This piece was not published till 1606; but appears to have been written in 1602,—certainly was produced before the death of Queen Eli-

which, however he may talk of his almost idolatrous affection, produced on his part, from that time to the death of our author, and for many years afterwards, much clumsy farcasm, and many malevolent reflections.²

zabeth, which happened on the 24th of March, 1602-3.] "Why here's our fellow Shakspeare puts them all down; ay and Ben Jonson too. O, that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow; he brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakspeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit."

The play of Jonson's in which *he gave the poets a pill*, is the *Poetaster*, acted in 1601. In that piece some passages of *King Henry V.* are ridiculed. In what manner Shakspeare put him down, or made him bewray his credit, does not appear. His retaliation, we may be well assured, contained no gross or illiberal abuse; and, perhaps, did not go beyond a ballad or an epigram, which may have perished with things of greater consequence. He has, however, marked his disregard for the calumniator of his fame, by not leaving him any memorial by his Will.—In an apologetical dialogue which Jonson annexed to the *Poetaster*, he says, he had been provoked for three years (i. e. from 1598 to 1601) on every stage by slanderers; as for the players, he says,

"——— It is true, I tax'd them,

" And yet but some, and those so sparingly,

" As all the rest might have sat still unquestion'd:—

"——— What they have done against me

" I am not mov'd with. If it gave them meat,

" Or got them cloaths, 'tis well; that was their end.

" Only, amongst them, I am sorry for

" Some better natures, by the rest drawn in

" To run in that vile line."

By the words "*Some better natures*," there can, I think, be little doubt that Shakspeare was alluded to.

² In his *Silent Woman*, 1609, Act V. sc. ii. Jonson perhaps pointed at Shakspeare, as one whom he viewed with scornful, yet with jealous, eyes:

" So they may censure poets and authors, and compare them; Daniel with Spenser, Jonson with t'other youth, and so forth." Decker, however, might have been meant.

Again, in the same play:

" You two shall be the chorus behind the arras, and whip out between the acts, and speak."

In the Induction to *Bartholemew Fair*, which was acted in 1614,

On this play Mr. Pope has the following note,
Act I. sc. i.

two years before the death of our author, three of his plays, and in the piece itself two others, are attempted to be ridiculed.

In *The Devil's an Ass*, acted in 1616, all his historical plays are obliquely censured.

Meer-er. "By my faith you are cunning in the chronicles.

Fitz-dot. "No, I confess, I ha't from the play-books, and think they are more authentick."

They are again attacked in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*:

"An some writer that I know, had but the penning o' this matter, he would ha' made you such a *jig-a-jog i' the booths*, you should ha' thought an *earthquake* had been in the fair. But these *master-poets*, they will ha' their own absurd courses, they will be informed of nothing."

The following passage in *Cynthia's Revels*, 1601, was, I think, likewise pointed against Shakspeare:

"Besides, they would wish your poets would leave to be promoters of other men's jests, and to way-lay all the stale apothegms or *old books* they can hear of, in print or otherwise, to farce their scenes withal:—Again, that feeding their friends with nothing of their own, but what they have *twice* or *thrice cooked*, they should not wantonly give out how soon they had *dress'd it*, nor how many coaches came to carry away the broken meat, besides hobby-horses and foot-cloth nags."

Jonson's plots were all his own invention; our author's chiefly taken from preceding plays or novels. The former employed a year or two in composing a play; the latter probably produced two every year, while he remained in the theatre.

The Induction to *The Staple of News*, which appeared in 1625, not very long after the publication of our author's plays in folio, contains a sneer at a passage in *Julius Cæsar*:

"Know, Cæsar doth not wrong; nor without cause

"Will he be satisfied."

which for the purpose of ridicule is quoted unfaithfully; and in the same play may be found an effort, as impotent as that of Voltaire*, to raise a laugh at Hamlet's exclamation when he kills Polonius.

Some other passages which are found in Jonson's works, might be mentioned in support of this observation, but being quoted hereafter for other purposes, they are here omitted.

* "Ah! ma mere, s'écrie-t-il, il y a un gros rat derrière la tapisserie;—il tire son épée, court au rat, et tue le bon homme Polonius." *Oeuvres de Voltaire*, Tome XV. p. 473. 4to.

"This first scene was added since the edition of 1608, which is much short of the present editions, wherein the speeches are generally enlarged, and raised; several whole scenes besides, and the choruses also, were since *added by Shakspeare*."

Dr. Warburton also positively asserts that this first scene was written after the accession of K. James I. and the subsequent editors agree, that several additions were made *by the author* to *King Henry V.* after it was originally composed. But there is, I believe, no good ground for these asser-

Notwithstanding these proofs, Jonson's malevolence to Shakspeare, and jealousy of his superior reputation, have been doubted by Mr. Pope and others: and much stress has been laid on a passage in his *Discoveries*, and on the commendatory verses prefixed to the first edition of our author's plays in folio.—The reader, after having perused the following character of Jonson, drawn by Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, a contemporary, and an intimate acquaintance of his, will not, perhaps, readily believe these *posthumous* encomiums to have been sincere. "Ben Jonson," says that writer, "was a great lover and praiser of himself; a contemner and scorner of others; given rather to lose a friend than a jest; jealous of every word and action of those about him, especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he lived; a dissembler of the parts which reign in him; a bragger of some good that he wanted; thinketh nothing well done, but what either he himself or some of his friends have said or done; he is passionately kind and angry; careless either to gain or keep; vindictive, but, if he be well answered, [angry] at himself; interprets best sayings and deeds often to the worst.* He was for any religion, as being versed in both; oppressed with fancy, which over-mastered his reason, a general disease in many poets. His inventions are smooth and easy, but above all, he excelleth in translation." *Drummond's Works*, fol. 1711; p. 226.

In the year 1619 Jonson went to Scotland, to visit Mr. Drummond, who has left a curious account of a conversation that passed between them, relative to the principal poets of those times.

* His misquoting a line of *Julius Cæsar*, so as to render it nonsense, at a time when the play was in print, is a strong illustration of this part of his character. The plea of an unfaithful memory cannot be urged in his defence, for he tells us in his *Discoveries*, that till he was past forty, he could repeat every thing that he had written.

tions. It is true that no perfect edition of this play was published before that in folio, in 1623; but it does not follow from thence, that the scenes which then first appeared in print, and all the choruses, were added *by Shakspeare*, as Mr. Pope supposes, after 1608. We know indeed the contrary to be true; for the chorus to the fifth act must have been written in 1599.

The fair inference to be drawn from the imperfect and mutilated copies of this play, published in 1600, 1602, and 1608, is, not that the whole play, as we now have it, did not then exist, but that those copies were surreptitious; and that the editor in 1600, not being able to publish the whole, published what he could.

I have not indeed met with any evidence (except in three plays) that the several scenes which are found in the folio of 1623, and are not in the preceding quartos, were added by the second labour of the author.—The last chorus of *King Henry V.* already mentioned, affords a striking proof that this was not always the case. The two copies of *the Second Part of King Henry IV.* printed in the same year, (1600) furnish another. In one of these, the whole first scene of Act III. is wanting; not because it was then unwritten, (for it is found in the other copy published in that year,) but because the editor was not possessed of it. That what have been called *additions by the author*, were not really such, may be also collected from another circumstance; that in some of the quartos where these supposed additions are wanting, references and replies are found to the passages omitted.³

³ Of this see a remarkable instance in *King Henry IV. P. II.* Act I. sc. i. where Morton in a long speech having informed Northumberland that the archbishop of York had joined the rebel

I do not however mean to say, that Shakspeare never made any alterations in his plays. We have reason to believe that *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *the Merry Wives of Windsor*, were revised and augmented by the author; and a second revival or temporary topicks might have suggested, in a course of years, some additions and alterations in some other of his pieces. But with respect to the entire scenes that are wanting in some of the early editions, (particularly those of *King Henry V.* *King Richard II.* and *The Second Part of King Henry IV.*) I suppose the omissions to have arisen from the imperfection of the copies; and instead of saying that "the first scene of *King Henry V.* was added by the author after the publication of the quarto in 1600," all that we can pronounce with certainty is, that this scene is not found in the quarto of 1600.

19. MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, 1600.

Much Ado about Nothing was written, we may presume, early in the year 1600; for it was entered at Stationers' hall, August 23, 1600, and printed in that year.

It is not mentioned by Meres in his list of our author's plays, published in the latter end of the year 1598.

20. AS YOU LIKE IT, 1600.

This comedy was not printed till 1623, and the caveat or memorandum⁴ in the second volume of

party, the earl replies,—"*I knew of this before.*" The quarto contains the reply, but not a single line of the narrative to which it relates.

⁴ See Mr. Steevens's extracts from the books of the Stationers' company, ante, p. 426.

the books of the Stationers' company, relative to the three plays of *As you like it*, *Henry V.* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, has no date except *Aug. 4.* But immediately *above* that caveat there is an entry, dated May 27, 1600,—and the entry immediately *following* it, is dated Jan 23, 1603. We may therefore presume that this caveat was entered *between* those two periods: more especially, as the dates scattered over the pages where this entry is found, are, except in one instance, in a regular series from 1596 to 1615. This will appear more clearly by exhibiting the entry exactly as it stands in the book:

27 May 1600.

To Mr. Roberts.] Allarum to London.

4 Aug.

As you like it, a book.

Henry the Fift, a book.

Every Man in his Humour, a book.

Comedy of Much Ado about Nothing.

} to be
staied.

23 Jan. 1603.

To Thomas Thorpe,
and William Aspley.]

} This to be their copy, &c.

It is extremely probable that this 4th of August was of the year 1600; which standing a little higher on the paper, the clerk of the Stationers' company might have thought unnecessary to be repeated. All the plays which were entered with *As you like it*, and are here said *to be staied*, were printed in the year 1600 or 1601. The stay or injunction against the printing appears to have been very speedily taken off; for in ten days afterwards,

on the 14th of August, 1600, *King Henry V.* was entered, and published in the same year. So, *Much Ado about Nothing* was entered August 23, 1600, and printed also in that year: and *Every Man in his Humour* was published in 1601.

Shakspeare, it is said, played the part of Adam in *As you like it*. As he was not eminent on the stage, it is probable that he ceased to act some years before he retired to the country. His appearance, however, in this comedy, is not inconsistent with the date here assigned; for we know that he performed a part in Jonson's *Sejanus* in 1603.

A passage in this comedy furnishes an additional proof of its not having been written before the year 1596, nor after the year 1603. "I will weep for nothing," says Rosalind, "like *Diana in the fountain*." Stowe in his *Survey of London*, 1598, informs us, that in the year 1596, at the east side of the Cross in Cheapside was set up "a curious wrought tabernacle of gray marble, and in the same an alabaster image of *Diana*, and water conveyed from the Thames, prilling from her naked breast." To this the passage above cited certainly alludes. In his second edition of the same work, printed in 1603, he informs the reader, that the water flowed in this manner *for a time*, but that the statue was then *decayed*. It was, we see, in order in 1598, and continued so without doubt for two years afterwards, that is, till 1600, when *As you like it* appears to have been written.

In this comedy a line of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* is quoted. That poem was published in 1598, and probably before.

21. MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, 1601.

The following line in the earliest edition of this comedy,

“Sail like my pinnace to those *golden shores*,”

shews that it was written after Sir Walter Raleigh's return from Guiana in 1596.

The first sketch of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was printed in 1602. It was entered in the books of the Stationers' company, on the 18th of January 1601-2, and was therefore probably written in 1601, after the *two parts of King Henry IV.*, being, it is said, composed at the desire of Queen Elizabeth, in order to exhibit Falstaff in love, when all the pleasantries which he could afford in any other situation was exhausted. But it may not be thought so clear, that it was written after *King Henry V.* Nym and Bardolph are both hanged in *King Henry V.* yet appear in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Falstaff is disgraced in *The Second Part of K. Henry IV.* and dies in *King Henry V.*; but in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* he talks as if he were yet in favour at court; “*If it should come to the ear of the court how I have been transformed*,” &c.: and Mr. Page discountsenances Fenton's addresses to his daughter, *because he kept company with the wild prince and with Pointz*. These circumstances seem to favour the supposition that this play was written between the *First and Second Parts of King Henry IV.* But that it was not written then, may be collected from the tradition above mentioned. The truth, I believe, is, that though it ought to be read (as Dr. Johnson has observed) between *The Second Part of King Henry IV.* and *King Henry V.*, it was written after

King Henry V. and after Shakspeare had killed Falstaff. In obedience to the royal commands, having revived him, he found it necessary at the same time to revive all those persons with whom he was wont to be exhibited; Nym, Pistol, Bardolph, and the Page: and disposed of them as he found it convenient, without a strict regard to their situations, or catastrophes in former plays.

There is reason to believe that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was revised and enlarged by the author, after its first production. The old edition in 1602, like that of *Romeo and Juliet*, is apparently a rough draught, and not a mutilated or imperfect copy. The precise time when the alterations and additions were made, has not been ascertained: however, some passages in the enlarged copy may assist us in our conjectures on the subject.

Falstaff's address to Justice Shallow in the first scene shews that the alterations were made after King James came to the throne: "Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the king." In the first copy the words are, "*to the council.*"

When Mrs. Page observes to Mrs. Ford, that "these knights will hack," which words are not in the original copy, Shakspeare, it has been thought, meant to convey a covert sneer at King James's prodigality in bestowing knighthood in the beginning of his reign. Between the king's arrival at Berwick and the 2d of May, 1603, he made 237 knights; and in the following July near four hundred.

"The best courtier of them all," says Mrs. Quickly, "when *the court lay at Windsor*, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there have been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches, I warrant you, coach after coach," &c.

The court went to Windsor in the beginning of July, 1603, and soon afterwards the feast of Saint George was celebrated there with great solemnity. The Prince of Wales, the duke of Lenox, our poet's great patron the earl of Southampton, the earl of Pembroke, and the earl of Marre, were installed knights of the garter; and the chief ladies of England did homage to the queen. The king and queen afterwards usually resided in the summer at Greenwich. The allusion to the insignia of the order of the garter in the fifth act of this comedy, if written recently after so splendid a solemnity, would have a peculiar grace; yet the order having been originally instituted at Windsor by King Edward III., the place in which the scene lay, might, it must be owned, have suggested an allusion to it, without any particular or temporary object.—It is observable that Mrs. Quickly says, there had been knights, lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches, *coach after coach*, &c. Coaches, as appears from Howes's Continuation of Stowe's Chronicle, did not come into general use, till the year 1605. It may therefore be presumed that this play was not enlarged very long before that year.

There is yet another note of time to be considered. In the first scene of the enlarged copy of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Slender asks Mr. Page, "How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I hear he was outrun on Cotswale." He means the Cotswold hills in Gloucestershire. In the beginning of the reign of James the First, the Cotswold games were instituted by one Dover. They consisted, as Mr. Warton has observed, "of wrestling, leaping, pitching the bar, handling the pike, dancing of women, various kinds of hunting, and particularly coursing the hare with greyhounds."

Mr. Warton is of opinion that two or three years must have elapsed before these games could have been effectually established, and therefore supposes that our author's additions to this comedy were made about the year 1607. Dr. Farmer doubts whether Capt. Dover was the founder of these games. "Though the Captain," he observes, "be celebrated in the *Annalia Dubrensis* as the *founder* of them, he might be the *reviver* only, or some way contribute to make them more famous; for in the second part of *King Henry IV.* Justice Shallow reckons among the *swinge-bucklers*, "Will Squeele, a *Cotsole* man." In confirmation of Dr. Farmer's opinion Mr. Steevens remarks, that in Randolph's poems, 1638, is found "An eclogue on the noble assemblies *revived* on Cotswold hills by Mr. Robert Dover."

If the Cotswold games were celebrated before the death of Queen Elizabeth, the passage above cited certainly proves nothing. Let us then endeavour to ascertain that fact. Dover himself tells us in the *Annalia Dubrensis* that he was the *founder* of these games:

"Yet I was bold for better recreation

"To *invent* these sports, to counter-check that fashion."

and from Ben Jonson's verses in the same collection we learn that they were exhibited in the time of James I. and revived in 1636. Nothing more then follows from Randolph's verses, compared with Jonson's, than that the games had been discontinued after their first institution by Dover, (probably soon after the death of King James,) and were *revived* by their *founder* at a subsequent period. Cotswold, long before the death of Elizabeth, might have been famous for swinge bucklers, or in other words for strong men, skilled in fighting with sword and

buckler, wrestling, and other athletick exercises : but there is no ground for supposing that coursing with greyhounds, in order to obtain the prize of a silver collar, was customary there, till Dover instituted those prizes after the accession of James to the throne.

That they were instituted about the year 1603, when King James acceded to the English throne, may be collected from the account given of them by Wood in his *Athen. Oxon.* Vol. II. p. 812 : "The said games were *begun*, and continued at a certain time of the year, for 40 years, by one Robert Dover, an attorney of Burton on the heath in Warwickshire ; who did, *with leave from King James I.* select a place on Cotswold-hills in Gloucestershire, whereon those games should be acted. Dover was constantly there in person, well mounted and accoutred, and was the chief director and manager of those games, even till the rascally rebellion was begun by the Presbyterians, which gave a stop to their proceedings, and spoiled all that was generous and ingenious elsewhere."

This comedy was not printed in its present state till 1623, when it was published with the rest of our author's plays in folio. The republication of the imperfect copy in 1619 has been mentioned as a circumstance from which we may infer that Shakspeare's improved play was not written, or at least not acted, till some years after 1607. I confess, I do not perceive, on what ground this inference is made. Arthur Johnson, the bookseller for whom the imperfect copy of this play was published in 1602, when the whole edition was sold off, reprinted it in 1619, knowing that the enlarged copy remained in MS. in the hands of the proprietors of the Globe theatre, and that such of the publick as wished to read the play in any form,

must read the imperfect play, of which he had secured the property by entering it at Stationers' hall. In the same manner Thomas Pavier in 1619 reprinted the first and second parts of *The whole Contention of the two Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, though he could not but know that the *Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI.* which were formed on those pieces, and were much more valuable than them, had been frequently acted, antecedent to his republication, and that the original plays had long been withdrawn from the scene. Not being able to procure the improved and perfect copies, a needy bookseller would publish what he could.

22. KING HENRY VIII. 1601.

This play was probably written, as Dr. Johnson and Mr. Steevens observe, before the death of Queen Elizabeth, which happened on the 24th of March, 1602-3. The elogium on king James, which is blended with the panegyrick on Elizabeth, in the last scene, was evidently a subsequent insertion, after the accession of the Scottish monarch to the throne: for Shakspeare was too well acquainted with courts, to compliment in the lifetime of Queen Elizabeth, her presumptive successor, of whom history informs us she was not a little jealous. That the prediction concerning King James was added after the death of the queen, is still more clearly evinced, as Dr. Johnson has remarked, by the aukward manner in which it is connected with the foregoing and subsequent lines.

The following lines in that prediction may serve to ascertain the time when the compliment was introduced:

“ Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,
 “ His honour and the greatness of his name
 “ Shall be, and make new nations.”

Though Virginia was discovered in 1584, the first colony sent out went there in 1606. In that year the king granted two letters patent for planting that country, one to the city of London, the other to the cities of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth. The colony sent from London settled in Virginia; that from the other cities in New England; the capital of which was built in the following year, and called *James-town*. In 1606 also a scheme was adopted for the plantation of Ulster in Ireland.⁵ I suspect therefore that the panegyrick on the king was introduced either in that year, or in 1612, when a lottery was granted expressly for the establishment of English Colonies in Virginia.

It may be objected, that if this play was written after the accession of King James, the author could not introduce a panegyrick on him, without making Queen Elizabeth the vehicle of it, she being the object immediately presented to the audience in the last act of *King Henry VIII.*; and that, therefore, the praises so profusely lavished on her, do *not* prove this play to have been written in her lifetime; on the contrary, that the concluding lines of her character seem to imply that she was dead, when it was composed. The objection certainly has weight; but, I apprehend, the following observations afford a sufficient answer to it.

1. It is more likely that Shakspeare should have written a play, the chief subject of which is, the disgrace of Queen Catharine, the aggrandizement of Anne Boleyn, and the birth of her daughter, in the life-time of that daughter, than after her death;

⁵ Bacon's Works, Vol. IV, p. 440.

at a time when the subject must have been highly pleasing at court, rather than at a period when it must have been less interesting.

Queen Catharine, it is true, is represented as an amiable character, but still she is *eclipsed*; and the greater her merit, the higher was the compliment to the mother of Elizabeth, to whose superior beauty she was obliged to give way.

2. If *King Henry VIII.* had been written in the time of King James I. the author, instead of expatiating so largely in the last scene, in praise of the queen, which he could not think would be acceptable to her successor, who hated her memory,⁶ would probably have made him the principal figure in the prophecy, and thrown her into the background as much as possible.

3. Were James I. Shakspeare's chief object in the original construction of the last act of this play, he would probably have given a very short character of Elizabeth, and have *dwelt* on that of James, with whose praise he would have *concluded*, in order to make the stronger impression on the audience, instead of returning again to Queen Elizabeth, in a very awkward and abrupt manner, after her character seemed to be quite finished: an awkwardness that can only be accounted for, by supposing the panegyrick on King James an after-production.⁷

⁶ King James on his accession to the throne studiously marked his disregard for Elizabeth by the favour which he shewed to Lord Southampton, and to every other person who had been disgraced by her. Of this Shakspeare could not be ignorant.

⁷ After having enumerated some of the blessings which were to ensue from the birth of Elizabeth, and celebrated her majesty's various virtues, the poet thus proceeds:

“ *Cran.* In *her* days every man shall eat in safety

“ Under his own vine, what he plants, and sing

4. If the Queen had been dead when our author wrote this play, he would have been acquainted with the particular circumstances attending her death, the situation of the kingdom at that time, and of foreign states, &c. and as archbishop Cranmer is supposed to have had the gift of prophecy, Shakspeare, probably, would have made him mention some of those circumstances. Whereas the prediction, as it stands at present, is quite general, and such as might, without any hazard of error, have been pronounced in the life-time of her majesty; for the principal facts that it foretells, are, that she should die aged, and a virgin. Of the former, supposing this piece to have been written in 1601, the author was sufficiently secure; for she was then near seventy years old. The latter may perhaps be thought too delicate a subject, to have been mentioned while she was yet living. But we may presume, it was far from being an ungrate-

“ The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.
 “ God shall be truly known; and those about her
 “ From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
 “ And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.
 “ [Nor shall this peace *sleep* with her; but as when
 “ The bird of wonder *dies*, the maiden phoenix,
 “ Her ashes new-create another heir,
 “ As great in admiration as herself;
 “ So shall she leave her blessedness to one, &c.
 “ ————— *He* shall flourish,
 “ And, like a mountain cedar, reach his branches
 “ To all the plains about him:—our children’s children
 “ Shall see this, and bless heaven.
 “ *King.* Thou speakest wonders.]
 “ *Cran.* *She* shall be, to the happiness of England,
 “ An aged princess; many days shall see her,
 “ And yet no day without a deed to crown it.
 “ Would I had known no more! but she must *die*,
 “ She must, the saints must have her; yet a virgin,” &c.

The lines between crotchets are those supposed to have been inserted by the author after the accession of King James.

ful topick ; for very early after her accession to the throne, she appears to have been proud of her maiden character ; declaring that she was *wedded* to her people, and that she desired no other inscription on her tomb, than—*Here lyeth Elizabeth, who reigned and died a virgin.*⁸ Besides, if Shakspeare knew, as probably most people at that time did, that she became very solicitous about the reputation of virginity, when her title to it was at least equivocal, this would be an additional inducement to him to compliment her on that head.

5. Granting that the *latter part* of the panegyrick on Elizabeth implies that she was dead when it was composed, it would not prove that this play was written in the time of king James ; for *these latter lines* in praise of the queen, as well as the whole of the compliment to the king, might have been added after his accession to the throne, in order to bring the speaker back to the object immediately before him, the infant Elizabeth. And this Mr. Theobald conjectured to have been the case. I do not, however, see any *necessity* for this supposition ; as there is nothing, in my apprehension, contained in *any* of the lines in praise of the queen, inconsistent with the notion of the *whole* of the panegyrick on her having been composed in her life-time.

In further confirmation of what has been here advanced to shew that this play was probably written while queen Elizabeth was yet alive, it may be observed, (to use the words of an anonymous writer,⁹) that “ Shakspeare has cast the disagreeable parts of her *father's* character as much into shade as possible ; that he has represented him

⁸ Camden, 27. Melvil, 49.

⁹ The author of *Shakspeare Illustrated*.

as greatly displeased with the grievances of his subjects, and ordering them to be relieved; tender and obliging [in the early part of the play] to his queen, grateful to the cardinal, and in the case of Cranmer, capable of distinguishing and rewarding true merit." "He has exerted (adds the same author) an equal degree of complaisance, by the amiable lights in which he has shewn the *mother* of Elizabeth. Anne Bullen is represented as affected with the most tender concern for the sufferings of her mistress, queen Catharine; receiving the honour the king confers on her, by making her marchioness of Pembroke, with a graceful humility; and more anxious to conceal her advancement from the queen, lest it should aggravate her sorrows, than solicitous to penetrate into the meaning of so extraordinary a favour, or of indulging herself in the flattering prospect of future royalty."

It is unnecessary to quote particular passages in support of these assertions; but the following lines, which are spoken of Anne Boleyn by the Lord Chamberlain, appear to me so evidently calculated for the ear of Elizabeth, (to whom such incense was by no means displeasing,) that I cannot forbear to transcribe them:

"She is a gallant creature, and complete
 "In mind and feature. I persuade me, *from her*
 "Will fall some blessing to this land, which shall
 "In it be memoriz'd,"

Again:

"— I have perus'd her well;
 "Beauty and honour are in her so mingled,
 "That they have caught the king: *and who knows yet,*
 "But from this lady may proceed a gem,
 "To lighten all this isle."

Our author had produced so many plays in the preceding years, that it is not likely that *King*

Henry VIII. was written *before* 1601. It might perhaps with equal propriety be ascribed to 1602, and it is not easy to determine in which of those years it was composed; but it is extremely probable that it was written in one of them. It was not printed till 1623.

A poem, called the *Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey, Cardinal*, which was entered on the books of the Stationers' company, and published, in the year 1599, perhaps suggested this subject to Shakspeare.

He had also certainly read Churchyard's *Legend of Cardinal Wolsey*, printed in *The Mirrour of Magistrates*, 1587.

"Have we some strange Indian with the great tool come to court, the women so besiege us," says the Porter in the last act of this play. This note of time may perhaps hereafter serve to ascertain the date of this piece, though I cannot avail myself of it, not having been able to discover to what circumstance Shakspeare here alludes.

A play entitled *The Life and Death of Lord Cromwell*, was published at London in 1602. In the title-page it is said to be written by W. S.; letters which undoubtedly were inserted to deceive the reader, and to induce him to suppose that the piece was written by Shakspeare, as a kind of sequel to his *Henry VIII.* This circumstance may serve in some measure to confirm my conjecture that *King Henry VIII.* had been exhibited in the preceding year. Rowley's *King Henry VIII.* was published in 1605, probably with a view that it also might be confounded with Shakspeare's drama; and both it and *Lord Cromwell* were re-printed with the same fraudulent intention in 1613, in which year our author's play was revived with great splendour.

The Globe play-house, we are told by the continuator of Stowe's Chronicle, was burnt down, on St. Peter's day, in the year 1613, while the play of *K. Henry VIII.* was exhibiting. Sir Henry Wotton, (as Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed,) says in one of his letters, that this accident happened during the exhibition of a *new* play, called *All is True*; which, however, appears both from Sir Henry's minute description of the piece, and from the account given by Stowe's continuator, to have been our author's play of *K. Henry VIII.* If indeed Sir H. Wotton was accurate in calling it a *new* play, all the foregoing reasoning on this subject would be at once overthrown; and this piece, instead of being ascribed to 1601, should have been placed twelve years later. But I strongly suspect that the only novelty attending this play, in the year 1613, was its title, decorations, and perhaps the prologue and epilogue. The Elector Palatine was in London in that year; and it appears from the Ms. register of lord Harrington, treasurer of the chambers to K. James I. that many of our author's plays were then exhibited for the entertainment of him and the princess Elizabeth. By the same register we learn, that the titles of many of them were changed² in that year. Princes are fond of opportunities to display their magnificence before strangers of distinction; and James, who on his arrival here must have been dazzled by a splendour foreign to the poverty of his native kingdom, might have been peculiarly ambitious to exhibit before his son-in-law the mimick pomp

² Thus, *Henry IV. P. I.* was called *Hotspur*; *Henry IV. P. II.*, or *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, was exhibited under the name of *Sir John Falstaff*; *Much ado about Nothing* was new-named *Benedick and Beatrice* and *Julius Cæsar* seems to have been represented under the title of *Cæsar's Tragedy*.

of an English coronation.³ *K. Henry VIII*, therefore, after having lain by for some years unacted, on account of the costliness of the exhibition, might have been revived in 1613, under the title of *All is True*, with new decorations, and a new prologue and epilogue. Mr. Tyrwhitt observes, that the prologue has two or three direct references to this title; a circumstance which authorizes us to conclude, almost with certainty, that it was an occasional production, written some years after the composition of the play. *King Henry VIII*. not being then printed, the fallacy of calling it a new play on its revival was not easily detected.

Dr. Johnson long since suspected, from the contemptuous manner in which "*the noise of targets, and the fellow in a long motley coat,*" or in other words, most of our author's plays, are spoken of, in this prologue, that it was not the composition of Shakspeare, but written after his departure from the stage, on some accidental revival of *King Henry VIII*. by Ben Jonson, whose style, it seemed to him to resemble.⁴ Dr. Farmer is of

³ The Prince Palatine was not present at the representation of *K. Henry VIII*. on the 30th of June O. S. when the Globe play-house was burnt down, having left England some time before. But the play might have been revived for his entertainment in the beginning of the year 1613; and might have been occasionally represented afterwards.

⁴ In support of this conjecture it may be observed, that Ben Jonson has in many places endeavoured to ridicule our author for representing battles on the stage. So, in his prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*:

" — Yet ours, for want, hath not so lov'd the stage,
 " As he dare serve the *ill customs* of the age;
 " Or purchase your delight at such a rate,
 " As, for it, he himself must justly hate;
 " To make, &c.

the same opinion, and thinks he sees something of Jonson's hand here and there, in the dialogue also.

“ ——— or with three rusty swords,
 “ And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words,
 “ Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars,
 “ And in the tiring house bring wounds to scars.”

Again, in his *Silent Woman*, Act IV. sc. iv.

“ Nay, I would fit out a play, that were nothing but fights at sea, drum, trumpet, and target.”

We are told in the memoirs of Ben Jonson's life, that he went to France in the year 1613. But at the time of the revival of *King Henry VIII.* he either had not left England, or was then returned; for he was a spectator of the fire which happened at the Globe theatre during the representation of that piece. [See the next note.]

It may, perhaps, seem extraordinary, that he should have presumed to prefix this covert censure of Shakspeare to one of his own plays. But he appears to have eagerly embraced every opportunity of depreciating him. This occasional prologue (whoever was the writer of it) confirms the tradition handed down by Rowe, that our author retired from the stage some years before his death. Had he been at that time joined with Heminge and Burbage in the management of the Globe theatre, he scarcely would have suffered the lines above alluded to, to have been spoken. In lord Harrington's account of the money disbursed for the plays that were exhibited by his majesty's servants, in the year 1613, before the Elector Palatine, all the payments are said to have been made to “ *John Heminge*, for himself and the rest of his fellows;” from which we may conclude that he was then the principal manager. A correspondent, however, of Sir Thomas Puckering's (as I learn from Mr. Tyrwhitt) in a MS. letter, preserved in the Museum, and dated in the year 1613, calls the company at the Globe, “ *Bourbage's company*.”—Shakspeare's name stands before either of these, in the licence granted by K. James; and had he not left London before that time, the players at the Globe theatre, I imagine, would rather have been entitled, *his company*.—The burlesque parody on the account of Falstaff's death, which is contained in Fletcher's comedy of *the Captain*, acted in 1613, and the ridicule of Hamlet's celebrated soliloquy, and of Ophelia's death, in his *Scornful Lady*, which was represented about the same time, confirm the tradition that our author had then retired from the stage, careless of the fate of his writings, inattentive to the illiberal attacks of his contemporaries, and negligent alike of present and posthumous fame.

After our author's retirement to the country, Jonson was perhaps employed to give a novelty to the piece by a new title and prologue, and to furnish the managers of the Globe with a description of the coronation ceremony, and of those other decorations, with which, from his connection with Inigo Jones, and his attendance at court, he was peculiarly conversant.

The piece appears to have been revived with some degree of splendour; for Sir Henry Wotton gives a very pompous account of the representation. The unlucky accident that happened to the house during the exhibition, was occasioned by discharging some small pieces, called chambers, on King Henry's arrival at cardinal Wolsey's gate at Whitehall, one of which, being injudiciously managed, set fire to the thatched roof of the theatre.⁵

Since the above note was written, I have seen the mortgage which is printed in a preceding page, and was executed by Shakspeare in March 1612-13. From this deed we find that he was in London in that year; he might, however, have parted with his property in the theatre before.

⁵ The Globe theatre (as I learn from the Mss. of Mr. Oldys) was thatched with reeds, and had an open area in its center. This area we may suppose to have been filled by the lowest part of the audience, whom Shakspeare calls the *groundlings*.—*Chambers* are not, like other guns, pointed horizontally, but are discharged as they stand erect on their breeches. The accident may, therefore, be easily accounted for. If these pieces were let off behind the scenes, the paper or wadding with which their charges were confined, would reach the thatch on the inside; or if fixed without the walls, it might have been carried by the wind to the top of the roof.

This accident is alluded to, in the following lines of Ben Jonson's *Execration upon Vulcan*, from which it appears, that he was at the Globe playhouse when it was burnt; a circumstance which in some measure strengthens the conjecture that he was employed on the revival of *King Henry VIII.* for this was not the theatre at which his pieces were usually represented:

The play, thus revived and new-named, was probably called in the bills of that time, a *new* play; which might have led Sir Henry Wotton to describe it as such. And thus his account may be reconciled with that of the other contemporary writers, as well as with those arguments which have been here urged in support of the early date of *King Henry VIII*. Every thing has been fully stated on each side of the question. The reader must judge.

Mr. Roderick in his notes on our author, (appended to Mr. Edwards's *Canons of Criticism*,) takes notice of some peculiarities in the metre of the play before us; viz. "*that there are many more verses in it than in any other, which end with a re-*

" Well fare the wise men yet on the Bank-side,
 " My friends, the watermen! they could provide
 " Against thy fury, when, to serve their needs,
 " They made a Vulcan of a sheaf of reeds;
 " Whom they durst handle in their holy-day coats,
 " And safely trust to dress, not burn, their boats.
 " But O those reeds! thy mere disdain of them
 " Made thee beget that cruel stratagem,
 " (Which some are pleas'd to style but thy mad prank,)
 " Against *the Globe*, the glory of *the Bank*:
 " Which, though it were the fort of the whole parish,
 " Flank'd with a ditch, and forc'd out of a marish,
 " *I saw* with two poor *chambers* taken in,
 " And raz'd; ere thought could urge this might have been.
 " See the world's ruins! nothing but the piles
 " Left, and wit since to cover it with tiles.
 " The breth'ren, they straight nois'd it out for news,
 " 'Twas verily some relick of the stews,
 " And this a sparkle of that fire let loose,
 " That was lock'd up in the Winchestrian goose,
 " Bred on *the Bank* in time of popery,
 " When Venus there maintain'd her mystery.
 " But others fell, with that conceit, by the ears,
 " And cried, it was a threat'ning to the bears,
 " And that accursed ground, *the Paris-garden*," &c.

dundant syllable,"—"very near two to one,"—and that the "*cæsurae* or pauses of the verse are full as remarkable." The redundancy, &c. observed by this critick, Mr. Steevens thinks (a remark, which, having omitted to introduce in its proper place, he desires me to insert here,) "was rather the effect of chance, than of design in the author; and might have arisen either from the negligence of Shakspeare, who in this play has borrowed whole scenes and speeches from Holinshed, whose words he was probably in too much haste to compress into versification strictly regular and harmonious; or from the interpolations of Ben Jonson, whose hand Dr. Farmer thinks he occasionally perceives in the dialogue."

Whether Mr. Roderick's position be well founded, is hardly worth a contest; but the peculiarities which he has animadverted on, (if such there be) add probability to the conjecture that this piece underwent some alterations, after it had passed out of the hands of Shakspeare.

23. TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, 1602.

Troilus and Cressida was entered at Stationers' hall, Feb. 7, 1602-3, under the title of *The booke of Troilus and Cressida*, by J. Roberts, the printer of *Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. It was therefore, probably, written in 1602. It was printed in 1609, with the title of *The History of Troilus and Cressida*, with a preface by the editor, who speaks of it as if it had not been then acted. But it is entered in 1602-3, "*as acted by my Lord Chamberlen's men.*" The players at the Globe theatre, to which Shakspeare belonged, were called *the Lord Chamberlen's*

servants, till the year 1603. In that year they obtained a licence for their exhibitions from king James; and from that time they bore the more honourable appellation of *his majesty's servants*. There can, therefore, be little doubt, that the *Troilus and Cressida* which is here entered, as acted at Shakspeare's theatre, was his play, and was, if not represented, intended to have been represented there.⁶

Perhaps the two discordant accounts, relative to this piece, may be thus reconciled. It might have been performed in 1602 at *court*, by the lord chamberlain's servants, (as many plays at that time were,) and yet not have been exhibited on the public stage till some years afterwards. The editor in 1609 only says, "it had never been staled with the *stage*, never clapper-claw'd with the palms of *the vulgar*."

As a further proof of the early appearance of *Troilus and Cressida*, it may be observed, that an incident in it seems to be burlesqued in a comedy entitled *Histrionastix*, which, though not printed till 1610, must have been written before the death of Queen Elizabeth, who, in the last act of the piece, is shadowed under the character of Astræa, and is spoken of as then living.

In our author's play, when Troilus and Cressida part, he gives her his sleeve, and she, in return, presents him with her glove.

To this circumstance these lines in *Histrionastix* seem to refer. They are spoken by Troilus and Cressida, who are introduced in an interlude:

⁶ No other play with this title has come down to us. We have therefore a right to conclude that the play entered in the books of the Stationers' company, was Shakspeare's.

[See Vol. II. p. 482, from whence it is proved that there was an earlier play on this subject. STEEVENS.]

" *Troi.* Come, Cressida, my creffet light,
 " Thy face doth shine both day and night.
 " Behold, behold, *thy garter blue*
 " *Thy knight his valiant elbow weares,*
 " That, when he shakes his furious speare,
 " The foe in shivering fearful fort
 " May lay him down in death to snort.
 " *Cress.* O knight, with valour in thy face,
 " Here take my skreene, weare it for grace;
 " Within thy helmet put the same,
 " Therewith to make thy enemies lame."

In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Troilus is mentioned as "the first employer of pandars." Shakspeare, therefore, probably had read Chaucer's poem before the year 1600, when that play was printed.

In *Cymbeline* it is said, that

" Therfites' body is as good as Ajax',
 " When neither are alive."

This seems to import a precedent knowledge of Ajax and Therfites, and in this light may be regarded as a presumptive proof that *Troilus and Cressida* was written before *Cymbeline*.

Dryden supposed *Troilus and Cressida* to have been one of Shakspeare's earliest performances;⁷ but has not mentioned on what principles he founded his judgment. Pope, on the other hand, thought it one of his last; grounding his opinion not only on the preface by the editor in 1609, but on "the great number of observations both moral and political with which this piece is crowded, more than any other of our author's." For my own part,

⁷ "The tragedy which I have undertaken to correct, was in all probability, one of his *first endeavours* on the stage.—Shakspeare (as I hinted) *in the apprenticeship of his writing* modelled it [the story of Lollius] into that play which is now called by the name of *Troilus and Cressida*."—Dryden's pref. to *Troilus and Cressida*.

were it not for the entry in the Stationers' books, I should have been led, both by the colour of the writing and by the above-mentioned preface, to class it (though not one of our author's happiest effusions) in 1608, rather than in that year in which it is here placed.

24. MEASURE FOR MEASURE, 1603.

This play was not registered at Stationers' hall, nor printed, till 1623. But from two passages in it, which seem intended as a courtly apology for the stately and ungracious demeanour of King James I. on his entry into England, it appears probable that it was written not long after his accession to the throne:

" I'll privily away. I love the people,
 " But do not like to stage me to their eyes.
 " Though it do well, I do not relish well
 " Their loud applause, and aves vehement;
 " Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
 " That does affect it." *Measure for Measure*, Act I. sc. i.

Again, Act II. sc. iv:

" ————— So
 " The general, subject to a well-wish'd king,
 " Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
 " Croud to his presence, where their untaught love
 " Must needs appear offence."⁸

King James was *so much* offended by the *untaught*, and, we may add, undeserved, gratulations of his subjects, on his entry into England, that he issued a proclamation, forbidding the people to resort to him.—"Afterwards," says the historian of his reign, "in his publick appearances, especially in his

⁸ See Mr. Tyrwhitt's note.

sports, the accesses of the people made him so impatient, that he often dispersed them with frowns, that we may not say with *curses*.”⁹

It is observable throughout our author's plays, that he does not scruple to introduce English signs, habits, customs, names, &c. though the scene of his drama lies in a foreign country; and that he has frequent allusions to the circumstances of the day, though the events which form the subject of his piece are supposed to have happened a thousand years before. Thus, in *Coriolanus*, *Hob* and *Dick* are plebeians; and the Romans toss their caps in the air, with the same expressions of festivity which our poet's contemporaries displayed in Stratford or London. In *Twelfth Night* we hear of the bed of Ware, and the bells of Saint Bennet; and in *The Taming of the Shrew* the *Pegasus*, a sign of a publick house in Cheapside in the time of Queen Elizabeth, is hung up in a town in Italy. In *Hamlet* the Prince of Denmark and Guildenstern hold a long conversation concerning the children of the Chapel and St. Pauls'. The opening of the present play, viewed in this light, furnishes an additional argument in support of the date which I have assigned to it. When King James came to the throne of England, March 24, 1602-3, he found the kingdom engaged in a war with Spain, which had lasted near twenty years. “*Heaven grant us his peace!*” says a gentleman to Lucio, Act I. sc. ii.; and afterwards the bawd laments, that “*what with the war, what with the sweat, she was custom-shrunk.*” Supposing these two passages to relate to our author's own time, they almost decisively prove *Measure for Measure* to have been written in 1603; when the war was not yet

⁹ Wilson's *History of King James*, ad ann. 1603.

ended, as the latter words seem to imply, and when there was some *prospect* of peace, as the former seem to intimate. Our British Solomon very soon after his accession to the throne manifested his pacifick disposition, though the peace with Spain was not proclaimed till the 19th of August, 1604.

By *the sweat*, considering who the speaker is, it is probable that the disorder most fatal to those of her profession was intended. However, the plague was sometimes so called; and perhaps the dreadful pestilence of 1603 was meant; which carried off in the month of July in that year 857 persons, and in the whole year 30,578 persons: that is, one fifth part of the people in the metropolis; the total number of the inhabitants of London being at that time about one hundred and fifty thousand. If such was the allusion, it likewise confirms the date attributed to this play.

Some part of this last argument in confirmation of the date which I had assigned some years ago to the comedy before us, I owe to Mr. Capell; and while I acknowledge the obligation, it is but just to add, that it is the only one that I met with, which in the smallest degree could throw any light on the present inquiry into the dates of our author's plays,

“ In the dry desert of *ten* thousand lines ;”

after wading through two ponderous volumes in quarto, written in a style manifestly formed on that of the Clown in the comedy under our consideration, whose narratives, we are told, were calculated to last out *a night in Russia, when nights are at the longest*.

In the year 1604, says Wilson the historian, “ the sword and buckler trade being out of date,

diverse sects of vitious persons, under the title of *roaring boys*, *bravadoes*, *roysters*, &c. commit many insolencies; the streets swarm night and day with quarrels: private duels are fomented, especially between the English and Scotch: and great feuds between protestants and papists." A proclamation was published to restrain these enormities; which proving ineffectual, the legislature interposed, and the act commonly called the statute of stabbing, 1 Jac. I. c. 8. was made. This statute, as Sir Michael Forster observes, was principally intended to put a stop to the outrages above enumerated, "committed by persons of inflammable spirits and deep resentment, who, wearing short daggers under their cloaths, were too well prepared to do quick and effectual execution upon provocations extremely slight." King James's first parliament met on the 19th of March, 1603-4, and sat till the 7th of July following. From the time of James's accession to the throne great animosity subsisted between the English and Scotch; and many of the outrageous acts which gave rise to the statute of stabbing, had been committed in the preceding year, about the end of which year I suppose *Measure for Measure* to have been written. The enumeration made by the Clown, in the fourth act, of the persons who were confined with him in the prison, is an additional confirmation of the date assigned to it. Of ten prisoners whom he names, four are stabbers, or duellists: "Master Starvelacky, the rapier and dagger man, young Drop-heir that kill'd lusty Pudding, Master Forth-right, the tilter, and wild Half-can that stabb'd Pots."

That *Measure for Measure* was written before 1607, may be fairly concluded from the following passage in a poem published in that year, which we have good ground to believe was copied from

a similar thought in this play, as the author, at the end of his piece, professes a personal regard for Shakspeare, and highly praises his *Venus and Adonis*:²

“ So play the foolish *throngs* with one that *swoons*;
 “ Come all to *help* him, and so stop the *air*
 “ By which he should revive.”

Measure for Measure, Act II. sc. iv.

“ And like as when some sudden extasie
 “ Seizeth the nature of a fickle man;
 “ When he’s discern’d to *swoone*, strait by and by
 “ Folke to his *helpe* confusedly have ran;
 “ And seeking with their art to fetch him backe,
 “ So many *throng*, that he the *ayre* doth lacke.”

Myrrha, the Mother of Adonis, or Luste’s Prodigies,
 by William Barksted, a poem, 1607.

25. THE WINTER’S TALE, 1604.

Greene’s *Dorastus and Fawnia*, from which the plot of this play was taken, was published in 1588.

The Winter’s Tale was not entered on the Stationers’ books, nor printed till 1623. It was acted at court in 1613.³

² See the verses alluded to, ante, p. 423, & seq. n. 9. This writer does not seem to have been very scrupulous about adopting either the thoughts or expressions of his contemporaries; for in his poem are found two lines taken *verbatim* from Marston’s *Insatiate Countess*, printed four years before *Myrrha, the Mother of Adonis*, &c.

“ Night, like a masque, was enter’d heaven’s great hall,
 “ With thousand torches ushering the way.”

It appears from Ben Jonson’s *Silent Woman*, that W. Barksted was an actor, and was employed in the theatre where our author’s plays were represented. He might therefore have performed a part in *Measure for Measure*, or have seen the copy before it was printed.

³ MS. of the late Mr. Vertue.—I had observed in a note that Ben Jonson has ridiculed this play and *The Tempest*, in his *Bartholomew Fair*, which first appeared in the year 1614, and that he might have been induced to do so from their having been acted at

In the first edition of this essay I supposed *The Winter's Tale* to have been written in 1594; an error (as it now appears to me) into which I was led by an entry in the Stationers' registers dated May 22, in that year, of a piece entitled *A Winter-Night's Pastime*, which I imagined might have been this play under another name, the titles of our author's plays having been sometimes changed.⁴

The opinion, however, which I gave on this subject, was by no means a decided one. I then mentioned that "Mr. Walpole thought, that this play was intended by Shakspeare as an indirect apology for Anne Bullen, in which light it might

court in the preceding year. But I am now inclined to think that he rather joined these plays in the same censure, in consequence of their having been produced at no great distance of time from each other; and that *The Winter's Tale* ought to have been ascribed to the year 1613. In the office-book of Sir Henry Herbert I observe, that among the court-plays performed at Christmas were generally included the last new pieces which had been exhibited on the publick stage. Several of Fletcher's latter plays were performed at court in the same year in which they were first represented. But the entry which has been quoted in a preceding page, relative to *The Winter's Tale*, furnishes a still stronger reason for referring it to this year; for it appears that it had been originally licensed by Sir George Buck, and that the licensed copy had been lost. The licensed copy of *The Honest Man's Fortune*, which was produced in the year 1613, was likewise lost, and afterwards re-licensed by Sir Henry Herbert on its revival in 1624-5. It is highly probable that *The Winter's Tale* was first exhibited at the Globe in the same year, and that both these pieces were destroyed by the fire which consumed that theatre, June 30, 1613.

Though Sir George Buck obtained a reversionary grant of the office of Master of the Revels, in 1603, which title Camden has given him in the edition of his *Britannia* printed in 1607, it appears from various documents in the Pells-office that he did not get complete possession of his place till August 1610.

⁴ Thus, *Hamlet* was sometimes called *Hamlet's Revenge*, sometimes *The History of Hamlet*; *The Merchant of Venice* was sometimes called *The Jew of Venice*, &c. See p. 560, n. 2.

be considered as a Second Part to *King Henry VIII.*; and that my respect for that very judicious and ingenious writer, the silence of Meres, in whose catalogue of our author's dramas published in 1598 the play before us is not found, and the circumstance of there not being a single rhyming couplet throughout this piece, except in the chorus, made me doubt whether it ought not rather to be ascribed to the year 1601 or 1602, than that in which I then placed it."

The doubts which I then entertained, a more attentive examination of this play has confirmed; and I am now persuaded that it was not near so early a composition as the entry above-mentioned led me to suppose.

Mr. Walpole has observed,^s that "*The Winter's Tale* may be ranked among the historick plays of Shakspeare, though not one of his numerous critics and commentators have discovered the drift of it. It was certainly intended (in compliment to Queen Elizabeth) as an indirect apology for her mother Anne Boleyn. The address of the poet appears no where to more advantage. The subject was too delicate to be exhibited on the stage without a veil; and it was too recent, and touched the queen too nearly, for the bard to have ventured so home an allusion on any other ground than compliment. The unreasonable jealousy of Leontes, and his violent conduct in consequence, form a true portrait of Henry the Eighth, who generally made the law the engine of his boisterous passions. Not only the general plan of the story is most applicable, but several passages are so marked, that they touch the real history nearer than the fable. Hermione on her trial says,

^s *Historick Doubts.*

“ ————— for honour,
“ 'Tis a derivative from me to mine,
“ And only that I stand for.”

This seems to be taken from the very letter of Anne Boleyn to the king before her execution, when she pleads for the infant princess, his daughter. Mamillius, a young prince, an unnecessary character, dies in his infancy; but it confirms the allusion, as queen Anne, before Elizabeth, had a still-born son. But the most striking passage, and which had nothing to do in the tragedy, but as it pictured Elizabeth, is, where Paulina describing the new-born princess, and her likeness to her father, says, “*she has the very trick of his frown.*” There is another sentence indeed so applicable, both to Elizabeth and her father, that I should suspect the poet inserted it after her death. Paulina, speaking of the child, tells the king:

“ ————— 'Tis yours;
“ And, might we lay the old proverb to your charge,
“ So like you, 'tis the worse.”

This conjecture must, I think, be acknowledged to be extremely plausible. With respect, however, to the death of the young prince Mamillius, which is supposed to allude to Queen Anne's having had a still-born son, it is but fair to observe, that this circumstance was not an *invention* of our poet, being founded on a similar incident in Lodge's *Dorastus and Fawnia*, in which Garinter, the Mamillius of *The Winter's Tale*, likewise dies in his infancy. But this by no means diminishes the force of the hypothesis which has been just now stated; it only shews, that Shakspeare was not under the necessity of twisting the story to his purpose, and that this as well as the many other corresponding circumstances between the fictitious narrative of

Bellaria, (the Hermione of the present play) and the real history of the mother of Elizabeth, almost forced the subject upon him.

Sir William Blackstone has pointed out a passage in the first act of this play, which had escaped my observation, and which, as he justly observes, furnishes a proof that it was not written till after the death of queen Elizabeth :

“ ——— If I could find example
 “ Of thousands, that had struck anointed kings,
 “ And flourish’d after, I’d not do it ; but since
 “ Nor brass, nor stone, nor parchment, bears not one,
 “ Let villainy itself forswear it.”

These lines could never have been intended for the ear of her who had deprived the queen of Scots of her life. To the son of Mary they could not but have been agreeable.

If we suppose with Mr. Walpole that this play was intended as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth, it ought rather to be attributed to the year 1602, than that in which I have placed it : but the passage last quoted is inconsistent with such a date. Mr. Walpole himself also has quoted some lines, which he thinks could not have been inserted till after the death of Elizabeth. Perhaps our author lay’d the scheme of the play in the very year in which the queen died, and finished it in the next. This is the only supposition that I know of, by which these discordancies can be reconciled. I have therefore attributed it to 1604.

In that year was entered on the Stationers’ books “ A strange reporte of a *monstrous fish*, that appeared *in the form of a woman* from her waist upward, seene in the sea.” To this perhaps the poet alludes, when he makes Autolycus produce a ballad “ Of a *fish* that appeared upon the coast, on Wednesday

the fourscore of April, forty thousand fathom above water, and *sung* this ballad against the hard hearts of maids: it was thought, *she was a woman*, and was turn'd into a cold fish," &c.

There is, says one of the characters in this piece, "but one *Puritan* among them, and he sings psalms to hornpipes." The precise manners of the puritans was at this time much ridiculed by protestants; and the principal matters in dispute between them (whether the surplice should be used in the celebration of divine service, the cross in baptism, and the ring in marriage,) were gravely discussed at Hampton Court before the king, who acted as moderator, in the beginning of the year 1604. The points discussed on that occasion were, without doubt, very popular topicks at that time; and every stroke at the Puritans, for whom King James had a hearty detestation, must have been very agreeable to him as well as to the frequenters of the theatre, against which that sect inveighed in the bitterest terms. Shakspeare, from various passages in his plays, seems to have entirely coincided in opinion with his majesty, on this subject.

The metre of *The Winter's Tale* appears to me less easy and flowing than many other of our poet's dramas; and the phraseology throughout to be more involved and parenthetical than any other of his plays. In this harshness of diction and involution of sentences it strongly resembles *Troilus and Cressida*, and *King Henry the Eighth*, which I suppose to have been written not long before.

26. KING LEAR, 1605.

The tragedy of *King Lear* was entered on the books of the Stationers' company, Nov. 26, 1607,

and is there mentioned to have been played the preceding Christmas, before his majesty at Whitehall. But this, I conjecture, was not its first exhibition. It seems extremely probable that its first appearance was in March or April, 1605; in which year the old play of *King Leir*, that had been entered at Stationers' hall in 1594, was printed by Simon Stafford, for John Wright, who, we may presume, finding Shakspeare's play successful, hoped to palm the spurious one on the publick for his.⁶ The old *King Leir* was entered on the Stationers' books, May 8, 1605, as it was *lately* acted.

Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, from which Shakspeare borrowed some fantastick names of spirits, mentioned in this play, was printed in 1603. Our author's *King Lear* was not published till 1608.

This play is ascertained to have been written after the month of October, 1604, by a minute change which Shakspeare made in a traditional line, put into the mouth of Edgar:

“ His word was still,—Fie, foh, fum,

“ I smell the blood of a *British* man.”

The old metrical saying, which is found in one of Nashe's pamphlets, printed in 1596, and in other books, was,

⁶ Shakspeare has copied one of the passages in this old play. This he might have done, though we should suppose it not to have been published till after his *King Lear* was written and acted; for the old play had been in possession of the stage for many years before 1605; and without doubt he had often seen it exhibited; nor could he have found any difficulty in procuring a manuscript copy of it, when he sat down to write his own tragedy on the same subject. I suspect, however, the old play had been published in 1594.

" ————— Fy, fa, fum,
 " I smell the blood of an *Englishman*."

Though a complete union of England and Scotland, which was projected in the first parliament that met after James's accession to the English throne, was not carried into effect till a century afterwards, the two kingdoms were united in name, and he was proclaimed king of *Great Britain*, October 24, 1604.

27. CYMBELINE, 1605.

Cymbeline was not entered in the Stationers' books nor printed till 1623. It stands the last play in the earliest folio edition; but nothing can be collected from thence, for the folio editors manifestly paid no attention to chronological arrangement. Nor was this negligence peculiar to them: for in the folio collection of D'Avenant's works printed after his death, *Albovine, King of the Lombards*, one of his earliest plays, which had been published in quarto, in 1629, is placed at the end of the volume.

I have found in *Cymbeline* little internal evidence by which its date might be ascertained. Such evidence, however, as it furnishes, induces me to ascribe it to 1605, after Shakspeare had composed *King Lear*, and before he had written *Macbeth*. The character of Edgar in *King Lear* is undoubtedly formed on that of *Leonatus*, the legitimate son of the blind king of Paphlagonia, in Sydney's *Arcadia*. Shakspeare having occasion to turn to that book while he was writing *King Lear*, the name of *Leonatus* adhered to his memory, and he has made it the name of one of the characters in *Cymbeline*. The story of *Lear* lies near to that of

Cymbeline in Holinshed's Chronicle; and some account of Duncan and Macbeth is given incidentally in a subsequent page, not very distant from that part of the volume which is allotted to the history of those British kings. In Holinshed's *Scottish Chronicle* we find a story of one Hay, a husbandman, who, with his two sons, placed himself athwart a lane, and by this means stayed his flying countrymen; which turned the battle against the Danes. This circumstance, (which our poet has availed himself of in the fifth act of the play before us,) connected with what has been already mentioned relative to Sydney's *Arcadia*, renders it probable that the three plays of *King Lear*, *Cymbeline*, and *Macbeth*, were written about the same period of time, and in the order in which I have placed them. The history of King Duff, Duncan, and Macbeth, which Shakspeare appears to have diligently read, extends from p. 150 of Holinshed's *Scottish Chronicle* to p. 176; and the story of Hay occurs in p. 154 of the same Chronicle.

Mr. Steevens has observed, that there is a passage in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, which bears a strong resemblance to a speech of Jachimo in *Cymbeline*:

" I hear the tread of people : I am hurt ;
 " *The gods take part against me ; could this boor*
 " *Have held me thus, else ?*" *Philaster*, Act IV. sc. ii.

" ————— I have bely'd a lady,
 " The princess of this country ; *and the air of't*
 " *Revengingly enfeebles me ; or could this carle,*
 " *A very drudge of nature's, have subdued me*
 " *In my profession ?*" *Cymbeline*, Act V. sc. ii.

Philaster had appeared on the stage before 1611, being mentioned by John Davies of Hereford, in

his *Epigrams*, which have no date, but were published according to Oldys, in or about that year.⁷ Dryden mentions a tradition, (which he might have received from Sir William D'Avenant,) that *Philaster* was the first play by which Beaumont and Fletcher acquired reputation, and that they had written two or three less successful pieces, before *Philaster* appeared. From a prologue of D'Avenant's their first production should seem to have been exhibited about the year 1605. *Philaster*, therefore, it may be presumed, was represented in 1608 or 1609.

One edition of the tract called *Westward for Smelts*, from which part of the fable of *Cymbeline* is borrowed, was published in 1603.

In this play mention is made of Cæsar's immeasurable ambition, and Cleopatra's sailing on the Cydnus to meet Antony: from which, and other circumstances, I think it probable that about this time Shakspeare perused the lives of Cæsar, Brutus, and Mark Antony.

28. MACBETH, 1606.

Guthrie asserts in his History of Scotland, that King James, "to prove how thoroughly he was emancipated from the tutelage of his clergy, desired Queen Elizabeth in the year 1599 to send him a company of English comedians. She complied, and James gave them a licence to act in his capital and in his court. I have great reason to think, (adds the historian,) that the immortal Shakspeare was of the number."⁸ But his drama, which finds

⁷ *Additions to Langbaine's Account of dramatick Poets*, MS.

⁸ If the writer had any ground for this assertion, why was it

access at this day to the most insensible hearts, had no charms in the eyes of the presbyterian clergy. They threatened excommunication to all who attended the playhouse. Many forebore to attend the theatrical exhibitions. James considered the insolent interposition of the clergy as a fresh attack upon his prerogative, and ordered those who had been most active, to retract their menaces, which they unwillingly did; and we are told that the playhouse was then greatly crowded."

I know not to what degree of credit this anecdote is entitled; but it is certain, that James, after his accession to the English throne, was a great encourager of theatrical exhibitions. From 1604 to 1608 he devoted himself entirely to hunting, masques, plays, tiltings, &c. In 1605 he visited Oxford. From a book entitled *Rex Platonicus*, cited by Dr. Farmer, we learn, that on entering the city the king was addressed by three students of St. John's college, who alternately accosted his majesty, reciting some Latin verses, founded on the prediction of the weird sisters relative to Banquo and Macbeth.⁹

Dr. Farmer is of opinion, that this performance preceded Shakspeare's play; a supposition which is strengthened by the silence of the author of *Rex Platonicus*, who, if *Macbeth* had then appeared on the stage, would probably have mentioned something of it. It should be likewise remembered, that there subsisted at that time, a spirit of opposition and rivalry between the regular players and the academicks of the two universities; the latter

not stated? It is extremely improbable that Shakspeare should have left London at this period. In 1599 his *King Henry V.* was produced, and without doubt acted with great applause.

⁹ See Vol. VII. p. 588.

of whom frequently acted plays both in Latin and English, and seem to have piqued themselves on the superiority of their exhibitions to those of the established theatres.² Wishing probably to manifest this superiority to the royal pedant, it is not likely that they would choose for a collegiate interlude, (if this little performance deserves that name,) a subject which had already appeared on the publick stage, with all the embellishments that the magick hand of Shakspeare could bestow.

In the following July (1606) the king of Denmark came to England on a visit to his sister, Queen Anne, and on the third of August was installed a knight of the garter. "There is nothing to be heard at court," (says Drummond of Hawthornden in a letter dated that day,) "but sounding of trumpets, hautboys, musick, revelings, and comedies." Perhaps during this visit *Macbeth* was first exhibited.

This tragedy contains an allusion to the union of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, under one sovereign, and also to the cure of the king's-evil by the royal touch.³ A ritual for the healing of that distemper was established early in this reign; but in what year that pre-

² Ab ejusdem collegii alumni (qui et cothurno tragico et focco comico principes semper habebantur) *Vertumnus*, comœdia faceta, ad principes exhilarandos exhibetur. *Rex Platonius*, p. 78.

Arcadium restauratum Ifiacorum Arcadium lectissimi cecinerunt, unoque opere, principum omniumque spectantium animos immensa et ultra fidem affecerunt voluptate; simulque patrios ludiones, etsi exercitatissimos, quantum intersit inter scenam mercenariam & eruditam docuerunt. *Ib.* p. 228. See also *The Return from Parnassus*, (Act IV. sc. iii.) which was acted publicly at St. John's college in Cambridge.

³ *Macbeth*, Act IV. sc. i. ii.

tended power was assumed by King James I. is uncertain.

Macbeth was not entered in the Stationers' books, nor printed, till 1623.

In *The Tragedy of Cæsar and Pompey, or Cæsar's Revenge*, are these lines :

“ Why, think you, lords, that 'tis *ambition's* spur
“ That *pricketh* Cæsar to these high attempts ?”

If the author of that play, which was published in 1607, should be thought to have had *Macbeth's* soliloquy in view, (which is not unlikely,) this circumstance may add some degree of probability to the supposition that this tragedy had appeared before that year :

“ ————— I have no *spur*
“ To *prick* the sides of my intent, but only
“ Vaulting *ambition*, which o'erleaps itself,
“ And falls at the other——.”

At the time when *Macbeth* is supposed to have been written, the subject, it is probable, was considered as a topick the most likely to conciliate the favour of the court. In the additions to *Warner's Albion's England*, which were first printed in 1606, the story of “ *The Three Fairies or Weïrd Elves*,” as he calls them, is shortly told, and King James's descent from Banquo carefully deduced.

Ben Jonson, a few years afterwards, paid his court to his majesty by his *Masque of Queens*,⁴ presented at Whitehall, Feb. 12, 1609; in which he has given a minute detail of all the magick

⁴ Mr. Upton was of opinion that this masque preceded *Macbeth*. But the only ground which he states for this conjecture, is, “ that Jonson's pride would not suffer him to borrow from Shakspeare, though he stole from the ancients.”

rites that are recorded by King James in his book of *Dæmonologie*, or by any other author ancient or modern.

Mr. Steevens has lately discovered a MS. play, entitled *THE WITCH*, written by Thomas Middleton,⁵ which renders it questionable, whether Shakspeare was not indebted to that author for the first hint of the magick introduced in this tragedy. The reader will find an account of this singular curiosity in the note.⁶—To the observations of

⁵ In an advertisement prefixed to an edition of *A Mad World my Masters*, a comedy by Thomas Middleton, 1640, the printer says, that the author was “*long since dead.*” Middleton probably died soon after the year 1626. He was chronologer to the city of London, and it does not appear that any masque or pageant, in honour of the Lord Mayor, was set forth by him after that year.* From the dates of his printed plays, and from the ensuing verses on his last performance, by Sir William Lower, we may conclude, that he was as early a writer, and at least as old, as Shakspeare :

“*Tom Middleton his numerous issue brings,*
 “*And his last muse delights us when she sings :*
 “*His halting age a pleasure doth impart,*
 “*And his white locks shew master of his art.”*

The following dramattick pieces by Middleton appear to have been published in his life-time. *Your Five Gallants*, no date.—*Blurt Master Constable, or the Spaniard's Night-Walk*, 1602.—*Michaelmas Term*, 1607.—*The Phoenix*, 1607.—*The Family of Love*, 1608.—*A Trick to catch the Old One*, 1608.—*A mad World my Masters*, 1608.—*The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse*, 1611.—*Fair Quarrel*, 1617.—*A Chaste Maid of Cheapside*, 1620.—*A Game at Chess*, no date.—Most of his other plays were printed, about thirty years after his death, by Kirkman and other booksellers, into whose hands his manuscripts fell.

⁶ In a former note on this tragedy, I have said that the original edition contains only the two first words of the song in the 4th act, beginning—*Black spirits, &c* ; but have lately discovered the entire stanza in an *unpublished* dramattick piece, viz. “*A Tragi-Coomodie called THE WITCH : long since acted by his Ma.^{ties} Servants at the Black Friars ; written by Tho. Middleton.*” The song is there

* *The Triumph of Health and Prosperity at the Inauguration of the most worthy Brother, the Right Hon. Cutbert Hasket, draper ; composed by Thomas Middleton, draper, 1626, 4to,*

Mr. Steevens I have only to add, that the songs, beginning, *Come away*, &c. and *Black spirits*, &c.

called—"A charme-song, about a vessell." The other song omitted in the 5th scene of the 3d act of *Macbeth*, together with the imperfect couplet there, may likewise be found, as follows, in *Middleton's* performance.—The *Hecate* of *Shakspeare* says:

"I am for the air," &c.

The *Hecate* of *Middleton* (who like the former is summoned away by aerial spirits) has the same declaration in almost the same words:

"I am for aloft," &c.

"Song.] Come away, come away:

"Heccat, Heccat, come away." } *in the air.*

"Hec. I come, I come, I come,

"With all the speed I may,

"With all the speed I may.

"Wher's Stadlin?

"Heere.] *in the aire.*

"Wher's Puckle?

"Heere.] *in the aire.*

"And Hoppo too, and Hellwaine too.

"We lack but you, we lack but you: } *in the aire.*

"Come away, make up the count.

"Hec. I will but 'noynt, and then I mount.

"A spirit like a { There's one comes downe to fetch his
cat descends. { dues,
 { A kisse, a coll, a sip of blood:
 { And why thou staist so long

"I muse, I muse,

"Since the air's so sweet and good.

"Hec. Oh, art thou come?

"What newes, what newes?

"All goes still to our delight,

"Either come, or els

"Refuse, refuse." } *above.*

"Hec. Now I am furnish'd for the flight.

"Fire.] Hark, hark, the catt sings a brave treble in her owne
[language.

"Hec. going up.] Now I goe, now I flie,

"Malkin, my sweete spirit, and I.

"Oh what a daintie pleasure 'tis,

"To ride in the aire,

"When the moone shines faire,

"And sing, and daunce, and toy and kifs!

"Over woods, high rocks and mountains,

"Over seas, our mistris' fountains,

being found at full length in *The Witch*, while only the two first words of them are printed in *Macbeth*,

“ Over steepe towres and turrets,
 “ We fly by night ’mongst troopes of spiritts.
 “ No ring of bells to our eares sounds,
 “ No howles of wolues, no yelpes of hounds;
 “ No, not the noyse of waters’-breache,
 “ Or cannons’ throat, our height can reache.
 “ No ring of bells, &c.] *above.*

“ *Fire.*] Well, mother, I thank your kindness: you must be gambolling i’ th’aire, and leave me to walk here, like a foole and a mortall. *Exit.* *Finis Actus Tercii.*”

This *Fire-stone*, who occasionally interposes in the course of the dialogue, is called, in the list of Persons Represented,—“ The *Clowne* and *Heccat’s* son.”

Again, the *Hecate* of *Shakspeare* says to her sisters:

“ I’ll charm the *air* to give a sound,
 “ While you perform your antique round,” &c.

[*Musick. The Witches dance and vanish.*

The *Hecate* of *Middleton* says on a similar occasion:

“ Come, my sweete sisters, let the *aire* strike our tune,
 “ Whilst we shew reverence to yond peeping moone.”

[*Here they dance and Exeunt.*

In this play, the motives which incline the witches to mischief, their manners, the contents of their cauldron, &c. seem to have more than accidental resemblance to the same particulars in *Macbeth*. The hags of *Middleton*, like the weird sisters of *Shakspeare*, destroy cattle because they have been refused provisions at farm-houses. The owl and the cat (*Gray Malkin*) give them notice when it is time to proceed on their several expeditions. Thus *Shakspeare’s* *Witch*:

“ Harper cries;—’tis time, ’tis time.”

Thus too the *Hecate* of *Middleton*:

“ *Hec.*] Heard you the owle yet?

“ *Stad.*] Briefely in the copps.

“ *Hec.*] ’Tis high time for us then.”

The *Hecate* of *Shakspeare*, addressing her sisters, observes, that *Macbeth* is but a *wayward son*, who loves for his own ends, not for them. The *Hecate* of *Middleton* has the same observation, when the youth who has been consulting her, retires:

“ I know he loves me not, nor there’s no hope on’t.”

Instead of the *grease that’s sweaten from the murderer’s gibbet*, and the *finger of birth-strangled babe*, the witches of *Middleton* employ “ the gristle of a man that hangs after sunset,” (i. e. of a murderer, for all other criminals were anciently cut down before evening,) and

favour the supposition that Middleton's piece preceded that of Shakspeare; the latter, it should

the "fat of an unbaptized child." They likewise boast of the power to raise tempests that shall blow down trees, overthrow buildings, and occasion shipwreck; and, more particularly, that they can "*make miles of woods walk.*" Here too the Grecian *Hecate* is degraded into a presiding witch, and exercised in superstitions peculiar to our own country. So much for the scenes of enchantment; but even other parts of *Middleton's* play coincide more than once with that of *Shakspeare*. Lady *Macbeth* says, in Act II:

" ————— the surfeited grooms

" Do mock their charge with *snores*. I have drugg'd their
possets."

So too *Francisca*, in the piece of *Middleton*:

" ——— they're now all at rest,

" And Gaspar there and all:—Lift!—fast asleep;

" He *cryes* it hither.—I must disease you strait, sir:

" For the maide-servants, and the girles o' th' house,

" I *spic'd* them lately with a *drowsie posset*,

" They will not hear in haste."

And *Francisca*, like lady *Macbeth*, is watching late at night to encourage the perpetration of a murder.

The expression which *Shakspeare* has put into the mouth of *Macbeth*, when he is sufficiently recollected to perceive that the dagger and the blood on it, were the creation of his own fancy,—"*There's no such thing,*"—is likewise appropriated to *Francisca*, when she undeceives her brother, whose imagination had been equally abused.

From the instances already produced, perhaps the reader would allow, that if *Middleton's* piece preceded *Shakspeare's*, the originality of the magick introduced by the latter, might be fairly questioned; for our author (who as actor, and manager, had access to unpublished dramattick performances) has so often condescended to receive hints from his contemporaries, that our suspicion of his having been a copyist in the present instance, might not be without foundation. Nay, perhaps, a time may arrive, in which it will become evident from books and manuscripts yet undiscovered and unexamined, that *Shakspeare* never attempted a play on any argument, till the effect of the same story, or at least the ruling incidents in it, had been already tried on the stage, and familiarized to his audience. Let it be remembered, in support of this conjecture, that dramattick pieces on the following subjects,—viz. *King John*, *King Richard II. and III.* *King Henry IV. and V.* *King Henry VIII.* *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Measure for Measure*, the *Mer-*

seem, thinking it unnecessary to set down verses which were probably well known, and perhaps

chant of Venice, the Taming of a Shrew, and the Comedy of Errors, —had appeared before those of *Shakspeare*, and that he has taken somewhat from all of them that we have hitherto seen. I must observe at the same time, that *Middleton*, in his other dramas, is found to have borrowed little from the sentiments, and nothing from the fables of his predecessors. He is known to have written in concert with *Jonson, Fletcher, Massinger, and Rowley*; but appears to have been unacquainted, or at least unconnected, with *Shakspeare*.

It is true that the date of *THE WITCH* cannot be ascertained. The author, however, in his dedication (*to the trulie-worthie and generously-affected Thomas Holmes Esquire*) observes, that he recovered this ignorant-ill-fated labour of his (from the play-house, I suppose,) not without much difficultie. *Witches* (continues he) *are, ipso facto, by the law condemn'd, and that onely, I thinck, hath made her lie so long in an imprison'd obscuritie*. It is probable, therefore from these words, as well as from the title-page, that the play was written long* before the dedication, which seems to have been added soon after the year 1603, when the act of King James against witches passed into a law. If it be objected, that *THE WITCH* appears from this title-page to have been acted only by *his majesty's servants*, let it be remembered that these were the very players who had been before in the service of the *Queen*; but *Middleton*, dedicating his work in the time of *James*, speaks of them only as dependants on the reigning prince.

Here too it may be remarked, that the first dramattick piece in which *Middleton* is known to have had a hand, viz. *The Old Law*, was acted in 1599; so that *THE WITCH* might have been composed, if not performed at an earlier period † than the accession of *James* to the crown; for the belief of witchcraft was sufficiently popular in the preceding reigns. The piece in question might likewise have been neglected through the caprice of players, or retarded till it could be known that *James* would permit such representations; (for on his arrival here, both authors and actors who should

* That dramattick pieces were sometimes written long before they were printed, may be proved from the example of Marlowe's *Rich Jew of Malta*, which was entered on the books of the Stationers' company in the year 1594, but was not published till 1633, as we learn from the preface to it written by *Heywood*. It appears likewise from the same registers, that several plays were written, that were never published at all. STEEVENS.

† The spelling in the MS. is sometimes more antiquated than any to be met with in the printed copies of *Shakspeare*, as the following instances may prove:—*Byn* for *been*—*sollempnely* for *solemnly*—*dampnation* for *damnation*—*quight* for *quite*—*grizzel* for *gristle*—*dea* for *doe*—*ellyff* for *olive*, &c. STEEVENS.

then in the possession of the managers of the Globe theatre. The high reputation of Shakspeare's

have ventured to bring the midnight mirth and jollity of witches on the stage, would probably have been indicted as favourers of magick and enchantment;) or, it might have shrunk into obscurity after the appearance of *Macbeth*; or perhaps was forbidden by the command of the king. The witches of *Shakspeare* (exclusive of the flattering circumstance to which their prophecy alludes) are solemn in their operations, and therefore behaved in conformity to his majesty's own opinions. On the contrary, the hags of *Middleton* are ludicrous in their conduct, and lessen, by ridiculous combinations of images, the solemnity of that magick in which our scepter'd persecutor of old women most reverently and potently believed.

The conclusion to *Middleton's* dedication has likewise a degree of singularity that deserves notice,—“For your sake alone, she hath thus conjur'd herself abroad; and bears no other charmes about her, but what may tend to your recreation; nor no other spell, but to possess you with a beleif, that as she, so he, that *first* taught her to enchant, will alwaies be,” &c.—“He that taught her to enchant,” would have sufficiently expressed the obvious meaning of the writer, without aid from the word *first*, which seems to imply a covert censure on some person who had engaged his *Hecate* in a *secondary* course of witchcraft.

The reader must have inferred from the specimen of incantation already given, that this MS. play (which was purchased by *Major Pearson* out of the collection of *Benjamin Griffin*, the player, and is in all probability the presentation copy) had indubitably passed through the hands of *Sir William D'Avenant*; for almost all the additions which he pretends to have made to the scenes of witchcraft in *Macbeth* (together with the names of the supplemental agents) are adopted from *Middleton*. It was not the interest therefore of *Sir William*, that this piece should ever appear in print: but time that makes more important discoveries, has likewise brought his petty plagiarism to light.*

I should remark, that *Sir W. D.* has corrupted several words as well as proper names in the songs, &c. but it were needless to particularize his mistakes, as this entire tragi-comedy will hereafter be published for the satisfaction of the curious and intelligent readers of *Shakspeare*. STEEVENS.

* *Sir William D'Avenant* might likewise have formed his play of *Albovine King of Lombardy* on some of the tragick scenes in this unpublished piece by *Middleton*. Yet the chief circumstances on which they are both founded, occur in the fourth volume of the *Histoires Tragiques*, &c. par *François de Belle-forest*, 1580, p. 297, and at the beginning of *Machiavel's Florentine History*. STEEVENS.

performances (to mention a circumstance which in the course of these observations will be more than once insisted upon) likewise strengthens this conjecture; for it is very improbable, that Middleton, or any other poet of that time, should have ventured into those regions of fiction, in which our author had *already* expatiated;

“ — Shakspeare's magick could not *copy'd* be,
 “ Within that circle none durst walk but he.”

Other pieces of equal antiquity may, perhaps, be hereafter discovered; for the names of several ancient plays are preserved, which are not known to have been ever printed. Thus we hear of *Valentine and Orson*, *plaied by her Majesties players*,—The tragedy of *Ninus and Semiramis*,—*Titirus and Galathea*,—*Godfrey of Bulloigne*,—*The Cradle of Securitie*,—*Hit the Naile o'the Head*,—*Sir Thomas More*,—(Harl. MS. 7368) *The Isle of Dogs*, by Thomas Nashe,—The comedy of *Fidele and Fortunatus*,—The famous tragedy of *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, by Dr. Legge,—*The Freeman's Honour*, by William Smith,—*Mahomet and Irene*, the *Faire Greek*,—*The Play of the Cards*,—*Cardenio*,—*The Knaves*,—*The Knot of Fools*,—*Raymond Duke of Lyons*,—*The Nobleman*, by Cyril Tourneur,—[the last five, acted in the year 1613,] *The honoured Loves*,—*The Parliament of Love*,—and *Nonfuch*, a comedy; all by William Rowley;—*The Pilgrimage to Parnassus*, by the author of the *Return from Parnassus*,—*Believe as you List*, by Massinger,—*The Pirate*, by Davenport,—*Rosania or Love's Victory*, a comedy by Shirley, (some of whose plays were extant in MS. in Langbaine's time,)—*The Twins*, a tragedy, acted in 1613,—*Tancredo*, a tragedy, by Sir Henry Wotton,—*Demetrius and Marfina*, or *the imperial Impostor and unhappy Heroine*, a tragedy,

—*The Tyrant*, a tragedy,—*The Queen of Corsica*,—*The Bugbears*,—*The Second Maid's Tragedy*,—*Timon*, a comedy,—*Cataline's Conspiracy*, a tragedy,—and *Captain Mario*, a comedy; both by Stephen Gosson, —*The True Historie of George Scanderbeg*, as played by the right hon. the Earl of Oxenforde's servants, —*Jane Shore*,—*The Bold Beauchamps*,—*The Second Part of Sir John Oldcastle*,—*The General*,—*The Toy*, —*The Tell-tale*,¹ a comedy,—*The Woman's Plot*,—*The Woman's too hard for Him*, [both acted at court in 1621.]—*The Love-sick Maid*, [acted at court in 1629.]—*Fulgius and Lucretia*,—*The Fool Transformed*, a comedy,—*The History of Lewis the Eleventh, King of France*, a tragi-comedy,—*The Chaste woman against her Will*, a comedy,—*The Tooth-Drawer*, a comedy,—*Honour in the End*, a comedy, —*The History of Don Quixote, or the Knight of the ill-favoured countenance*, a comedy,—*The Fair Spanish Captive*, a tragi-comedy,—The tragedy of *Heildebrand*,—*Love yields to honour*,—*The Noble Friend*, &c. &c. Soon after the Restoration, one Kirkman, a bookseller, printed many dramatick pieces that had remained unpublished for more than sixty years; and in an advertisement subjoined to "*A true, perfect and exact catalogue of all the comedies tragedies, &c. that were ever yet printed and published, till this present year 1671,*" he says, that although there were, at that time, but eight hundred and six plays in print, yet many more had been written and acted, and that "he himself had *some quantity in manuscript.*"—The resemblance

¹ The persons represented in this play (which is in my possession) are—Duke; Fidelio; Aspero; Hortensio; Borgias; Picentio; Count Gismond; Fernese; Bentivoglio; Cosmo; Julio; Captain; Lieutenant; Ancient; two Doctors; an Ambassador; Victoria; Eleanor; Isabel; Lesbia.—Scene, Florence.

between *Macbeth* and this newly discovered piece by Middleton, naturally suggests a wish, that if any of the unpublished plays, above enumerated, be yet in being, (beside *The Second Maid's tragedy*, *The Tell-tale*, *Timon*, and *Sir Thomas More*, which are known to be extant,) their possessors would condescend to examine them with attention; as hence, perhaps, new lights might be thrown on others of our author's plays.

It has been already suggested that it is probable our author about the time of his composing *Cymbeline* and *Macbeth* devoted some part of his leisure to the reading of the lives of Cæsar and Antony in North's translation of Plutarch. In the play before there are two passages which countenance that conjecture. "Under him," says Macbeth,

"My genius is rebuk'd, as, it is said,

"Mark Antony's was by Cæsar."

The allusion here is to a passage in the Life of Antony; where Shakspeare also found an account of "the insane root that takes the reason prisoner," which he has introduced in *Macbeth*.

A passage in the 8th book of Daniel's *Civil Wars* seems to have been formed on one in this tragedy.⁸ The seventh and eighth books of Daniel's poem were first printed in 1609.

29. JULIUS CÆSAR, 1607.

A tragedy on the subject, and with the title, of *Julius Cæsar*, written by Mr. William Alexander, who was afterwards earl of Sterline, was printed in the year 1607. This, I imagine, was prior to

⁸ See Vol. VII. p. 379, n. 5.

our author's performance, which was not entered at Stationers-hall, nor printed, till 1623. Shakspeare, we know, formed at least twelve plays on fables that had been unsuccessfully managed by other poets ;⁹ but no contemporary writer was daring enough to enter the lists with him, in his life-time, or to model into a drama a subject which had already employed his pen : and it is not likely that Lord Sterline, who was then a very young man, and had scarcely unlearned the Scottish idiom, should have been more hardy than any other poet of that age.

I am aware, it may be objected, that this writer might have formed a drama on this story, not knowing that Shakspeare had previously composed the tragedy of *Julius Cæsar* ; and that, therefore, the publication of Mr. Alexander's play in 1607, is no proof that our author's performance did not then exist.—In answer to this objection, it may, perhaps, be sufficient to observe, that Mr. Alexander had, before that year, very wisely left the bleak fields of Menstrie in Clackmananshire, for a warmer and more courtly residence in London, having been appointed gentleman of the privy chamber to prince Henry : in which situation his literary curiosity must have been gratified by the earliest notice of the productions of his brother dramatists.

Lord Sterline's *Julius Cæsar*, though not printed till 1607, might have been written a year or two before ; and perhaps its publication in that year was in consequence of our author's play on the same subject being then first exhibited. The same observation may be made with respect to an anony-

⁹ See a note on *Julius Cæsar*, Act I. sc. i. in which they are enumerated.

mous performance, called *The Tragedie of Cæsar and Pompey, or Cæsar's Revenge*,² of which an edition (I believe the second) was likewise printed in 1607. The subject of that piece is the defeat of Pompey at Pharsalia, the death of Julius, and the final overthrow of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi. The attention of the town being, perhaps, drawn to the history of the *hook-nosed fellow of Rome*, by the exhibition of Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar*, the booksellers, who printed these two plays, might have flattered themselves with the hope of an expeditious sale for them at that time, especially, as Shakspeare's play was not then published.

It does not appear that Lord Sterline's *Julius Cæsar* was ever acted: neither it nor his other plays being at all calculated for dramattick exhibition. On the other hand, Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar* was a very popular piece; as we learn from Digges, a contemporary writer, who in his commendatory verses prefixed to our author's works, has alluded to it as one of his most celebrated performances.³

² There is an edition without date, which probably was the first. This play, as appears by the title-page, was privately acted by the students of Trinity College in Oxford. In the running title it is called *The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar*; perhaps the better to impose it on the publick for the performance of Shakspeare.

³ “ Nor fire nor cank’ring age, as Naso said
 “ Of his, thy wit-fraught book shall once invade:
 “ Nor shall I e’er believe or think thee dead,
 “ (Though mis’d) untill our bankrout stage be sped
 “ (Impossible!) with some new strain, t’out do
 “ Passions of *Juliet* and her *Romeo*;
 “ Or till I hear a scene more nobly take
 “ Than when thy half-sword parlying Romans spake.”

Verses by L. Digges, prefixed to the first edition of our author's plays, in 1623.

We have certain proof that *Antony and Cleopatra* was composed before the middle of the year 1608. An attentive review of that play and *Julius Cæsar*, will, I think, lead us to conclude that this latter was first written.⁴ Not to insist on the chronology of the story, which would naturally suggest this subject to our author before the other, in *Julius Cæsar* Shakspeare does not seem to have been thoroughly possessed of Antony's character. He has indeed marked one or two of the striking features of it, but Antony is not fully delineated till he appears in that play which takes its name from him and Cleopatra. The rough sketch would naturally precede the finished picture.

Shakspeare's making the *capitol* the scene of Cæsar's murder, contrary to the truth of history,

⁴ The following passages in *Antony and Cleopatra*, (and others of the same kind may perhaps be found,) seem to me to discover such a knowledge of the appropriated characters of the persons exhibited in *Julius Cæsar*, and of the events there dilated and enlarged upon, as Shakspeare would necessarily have acquired from having previously written a play on that subject :

“ *Pompey*.—I do not know

“ Wherefore my father should revengers want,

“ Having a son and friends, since *Julius Cæsar*,

“ *Who at Philippi the good Brutus ghosted,*

“ There saw you labouring for him. What was't,

“ That mov'd *pale* Cassius to conspire? And what

“ Made thee, *all-honour'd, honest, Roman Brutus,*

“ With the arm'd rest, courtiers of beauteous freedom,

“ To drench the capitol, but that they would

“ Have one man but a man?”

So, in another place :

“ When Antony found *Julius Cæsar* dead,

“ He cry'd almost to roaring; and he wept,

“ When at *Philippi* he found *Brutus* slain.”

Again :

“ *Ant.* He at *Philippi* kept

“ His sword ev'n like a dancer, while I struck

“ The *lean* and *wrinkled* Cassius; and 'twas I

“ That the *mad* Brutus ended.”

is easily accounted for, in *Hamlet*, where it afforded an opportunity for introducing a quibble; but it is not easy to conjecture why in *Julius Cæsar* he should have departed from Plutarch, where it is expressly said that Julius was killed in *Pompey's portico*, whose statue was placed in the centre. I suspect he was led into this deviation from history by some former play on the subject, the frequent repetition of which before his own play was written probably induced him to insert these lines in his tragedy :

“ ——— How many ages hence
 “ Shall this our lofty scene be *acted* o'er,
 “ In states unborn, and accents yet unknown!
 “ How many times,” &c.

“ The accents yet unknown” could not allude to Dr. Eedes's *Latin* play exhibited in 1582, and therefore may be fairly urged as a presumptive proof that there had been some English play on this subject previous to that of Shakspeare. Hence I suppose it was, that in his earlier performance he makes Polonius say that in his youth he had *enacted* the part of the Roman Dictator, and had been killed by Brutus in the capitol; a scenick exhibition which was then probably familiar to the greater part of the audience.

From a passage in the comedy of *Every Woman in her Humour*, which was printed in 1609, we learn, that there was an ancient droll or puppet-show on the subject of Julius Cæsar. “ I have seen (says one of the personages in that comedy,) *the city of Nineveh* and *Julius Cæsar* acted by mam-mets.” I formerly supposed that this droll was formed on the play before us: but have lately observed that it is mentioned with other “ motions,” (*Jonas, Ninevie, and the Destruction of Jerusalem,*)

in Marston's *Dutch Courtesan*, printed in 1605, and was probably of a much older date.

In the prologue to *The False One*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, this play is alluded to; ⁵ but in what year that tragedy was written, is unknown.

If the date of *The Maid's Tragedy* by the same authors, were ascertained, it might throw some light on the present inquiry; the quarrelling scene between Melantius and his friend, being manifestly copied from a similar scene in *Julius Cæsar*. It has already been observed that *Philaster* was the first play which brought Beaumont and Fletcher into reputation, and that it probably was represented in 1608 or 1609. We may therefore presume that the *Maid's Tragedy* did not appear before that year; for we cannot suppose it to have been one of the unsuccessful pieces which preceded *Philaster*. That the *Maid's Tragedy* was written before 1611, is ascertained by a MS. play, now extant, entitled *The SECOND Maid's Tragedy*, which was licensed by Sir George Buck, on the 31st of October, 1611. I believe it never was printed.⁶

- ⁵ “ New titles warrant not a play for new,
 “ The subject being old; and 'tis as true,
 “ Fresh and neat matter may with ease be fram'd
 “ Out of their stories that have oft been nam'd
 “ With glory on the stage. What borrows he
 “ From him that wrought old Priam's tragedy,
 “ That writes his love for Hecuba? Sure to tell
 “ Of Cæsar's amorous heats, and *how he fell*
 “ *In the Capitol*, can never be the same
 “ To the judicious.” Prologue to *The False One*.

⁶ This tragedy (as I learn from a MS. of Mr. Oldys) was formerly in the possession of John Warburton, Esq. Somerset Herald, and is now in the library of the Marquis of Landsdown. It had no author's name to it, when it was licensed, but was afterwards ascribed to George Chapman, whose name is erased by another hand, and that of *Shakspeare* inserted.

If, therefore, we fix the date of the original *Maid's Tragedy* in 1610, it agrees sufficiently well with that here assigned to *Julius Cæsar*.

It appears by the papers of the late Mr. George Vertue, that a play called *Cæsar's Tragedy* was acted at court before the 10th of April, in the year 1613. This was probably Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar*, it being much the fashion at that time to alter the titles of his plays.

30. ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, 1608.

Antony and Cleopatra was entered on the Stationers' books, May 2, 1608; but was not printed till 1623.

In Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*, Act IV. sc. iv. 1609, this play seems to be alluded to:

"*Morose*. Nay, I would fit out a play that were nothing but *fights at sea*, drum, trumpet and target."

31. TIMON OF ATHENS, 1609.

32. CORIOLANUS, 1610.

These two plays were neither entered in the books of the Stationers' company, nor printed, till 1623. Shakspeare, in the course of somewhat more than twenty years, having produced thirty-four or thirty-five dramas, we may presume that he was not idle any one year of that time. Most of his *other* plays have been attributed, on plausible grounds at least, to *former years*. As we have no proof to ascertain when the two plays under our consideration were written, it seems reasonable to

ascribe them to that period, to which we are not led by any particular circumstance to attribute any other of his works; at which, it is supposed, he had not ceased to write; which yet, unless these pieces were then composed, must, for aught that now appears, have been unemployed. When once he had availed himself of North's Plutarch, and had thrown any one of the lives into a dramatick form, he probably found it so easy as to induce him to proceed, till he had exhausted all the subjects which he imagined that book would afford. Hence the four plays of *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon*, and *Coriolanus*, are supposed to have been written in succession. At the time he was writing *Cymbeline* and *Macbeth* there is reason to believe he began to study Plutarch with a particular view to the use he might make of it on the stage.⁷ The Lives of Cæsar and Antony are nearly connected with each other, and furnished him with the fables of two plays; and in the latter of these lives he found the subject of a third, *Timon of Athens*.

There is a MS. comedy now extant, on the subject of *Timon*, which, from the hand-writing and the style, appears to be of the age of Shakspeare. In this piece a steward is introduced, under the name of *Laches*, who, like Flavius in that of our author, endeavours to restrain his master's profusion, and faithfully attends him when he is forsaken by all his other followers.—Here too a mock-banquet is given by Timon to his false friends; but, instead of warm water, stones painted like artichokes are served up, which he throws at his

⁷ See p. 581, and p. 593.

guests. From a line in Shakspeare's play, one might be tempted to think that something of this sort was introduced by him; though, through the omission of a marginal direction in the only ancient copy of this piece, it has not been customary to exhibit it:

" *Second Senator.* Lord Timon's mad.

" *3d Sen.* I feel it on my bones.

" *4th Sen.* One day he gives us diamonds, next day
stones."

This comedy, (which is evidently the production of a scholar, many lines of Greek being introduced into it,) appears to have been written after Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*, (1599,) to which it contains a reference; but I have not discovered the precise time when it was composed. If it were ascertained, it might be some guide to us in fixing the date of our author's *Timon of Athens*, which, on the grounds that have been already stated,⁸ I suppose to have been posterior to this anonymous play.

The great plagues of 1593 and 1603 must have made such an impression upon Shakspeare, that no inference can be safely drawn from that dreadful malady being more than once alluded to in *Timon of Athens*. However, it is possible that the following passages were suggested by the more immediate recollection of the plague which raged in 1609.

"I thank them," says Timon, "and would send them back the plague, could I but catch it for them."

Again:

"Be as a planetary plague, when Jove

"Will o'er some high-vic'd city hang his poison

"I the sick air."

Cominius, in the panegyrick which he pronounces on Coriolanus, says,

“ ——— In the brunt of seventeen battles since
“ He *lurch'd* all swords of *the garland*.”

In Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*, Act V. sc. last, we find (as Mr. Steevens has observed) the same phraseology: “ You have *lurch'd* your friends of the better half of *the garland*.”

I formerly thought this a sneer at Shakspeare; but have lately met with nearly the same phrase in a pamphlet written by Thomas Nashe, and suppose it to have been a common phrase of that time.

This play is ascertained to have been written after the publication of Camden's *Remaines*, in 1605, by a speech of Menenius in the first act, in which he endeavours to convince the seditious populace of their unreasonableness by the well-known apologue of the members of the body rebelling against the belly. This tale Shakspeare certainly found in the Life of Coriolanus as translated by North, and in general he has followed it as it is there given: but the same tale is also told of Adrian the Fourth by Camden, in his *Remaines*, p. 199, under the head of *Wise Speeches*, with more particularity; and one or two of the expressions, as well as the enumeration of the functions performed by each of the members of the body, appear to have been taken from that book.

“ On a time,” says Menenius in *Plutarch*, “ all the members of man's body dyd rebel against the bellie, complaining of it that it only remained in the midst of the bodie without doing any thing, neither dyd bear any labour to the maintenaunce of the rest: whereas all other partes and members dyd labour paynefully, and was veri careful to

satisfy the appetites and desiers of the bodie. And so the bellie, all this notwithstanding, laughed at their follie, and sayde, it is true, I first receyve all meates that norishe mans bodie; but afterwardes I send it againe to the norishment of other partes of the same. Even so (q^d. he) o you, my masters and citizens of Rome," &c.

In Camden the tale runs thus: "All the members of the body conspired against the stomach, as against the *swallowing gulf* of all their labours; for whereas *the eies beheld, the eares heard, the handes laboured, the feete travelled, the tongue spake, and all partes performed their functions*; onely the stomache lay ydle and consumed all. Hereuppon they joyntly agreed al to forbear their labours, and to pine away their lazie and publike enemy. One day passed over, the second followed very tedious, but the third day was so grievous to them all, that they called a common counsel. The eyes waxed dimme, the feete could not support the body; the armes waxed lazie, the tongue faltered, and could not lay open the matter. Therefore they all with one accord desired the *advice* of the *heart*. There *Reason* layd open before them," &c.

So, Shakspeare:

" There was a time when all the body's members
 " Rebell'd against the belly; thus accus'd it:—
 " That only *like a gulph* it did remain
 " In the midst of the body, idle and unactive,
 " Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing
 " Like labour with the rest; where the other instruments
 " Did *see* and *hear*, *devise*, *instruct*, *walk*, *feel*,
 " And mutually participate did minister
 " Unto the appetite and affection common
 " Of the whole body. The belly answered—
 " True it is, my incorporate friends, quoth he,
 " That I receive the general food at first;—
 " ————— But, if you do remember,
 " I send it through the rivers of the blood,
 " Even to the court, *the heart*, to the *seat o' the brain*."

The heart is called by one of the citizens, "the counsellor-heart;" and in making the counsellor-heart the seat of the brain or understanding, where *Reason* sits enthroned, Shakspeare has certainly followed Camden.

The late date which I have assigned to *Coriolanus*, derives likewise some support from Volumnia's exhortation to her son, whom she advises to address the Roman people—

" ——— now humble as the ripest mulberry,
" Which cannot bear the handling."

In a preceding page I have observed that mulberries were not much known in England before the year 1609. Some *few* mulberry-trees however had been brought from France and planted before that period, and Shakspeare, we find, had seen some of the fruit in a state of maturity before he wrote *Coriolanus*.⁹

33. OTHELLO, 1611.

Dr. Warburton thinks that there is in this tragedy a satirical allusion to the institution of the order of Baronets, which dignity was created by King James I. in the year 1611:

" ——— The hearts of old gave hands,
" But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts."

Othello, Act III. sc. iv.

⁹ I have some doubts concerning the concluding remark on the date of this play. The tree which is fit for breeding silk-worms, is the *white* mulberry, of which great numbers were imported into England in the year 1609: but *perhaps* we had the other species, which produces the best fruit, before that time. If that was the case, my hypothesis concerning the time when our poet planted the celebrated mulberry tree, may be controverted. *Valeat quantum valere possit.*

“ Amongst their other prerogatives of honour,” (says that commentator,) “ they [the new-created baronets] had an addition to their paternal arms, of an hand *gules* in an escutcheon argent. And we are not to doubt but that this was *the new heraldry* alluded to by our author; by which he insinuates, *that some then created had hands indeed, but not hearts; that is, money to pay for the creation, but no virtue to purchase the honour.*”

Such is the observation of this critick. But by what chymistry can the sense which he has affixed to this passage, be extracted from it? Or is it probable, that Shakspeare, who has more than once condescended to be the encomiast of the unworthy founder of the order of Baronets, who had been personally honoured by a letter from his majesty, and substantially benefited by the royal licence granted to him and his fellow-comedians, should have been so impolitick, as to satirize the king, or to depretiate his new-created dignity?

These lines appear to me to afford an obvious meaning, without supposing them to contain such a multitude of allusions:

Of old, (says Othello,) in matrimonial alliances, the heart dictated the union of hands; but our modern junctions are those of hands, not of hearts.

On every marriage the arms of the wife are united to those of the husband. This circumstance, I believe, it was, that suggested *heraldry*, in this place, to our author. I know not whether a heart was ever used as an armorial ensign, nor is it, I conceive, necessary to inquire. It was the office of the herald to *join*, or, to speak technically, to *quarter* the arms of the new-married pair.² Hence, with

² “ “ I may *quarter*, coz,” says Slender in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. “ You may (replies justice Shallow) by *marrying*.”

his usual licence, Shakspeare uses *heraldry* for *junction*, or *union* in general. Thus, in his *Rape of Lucrece*, the same term is employed to denote that *union* of colours which constitutes a beautiful complexion :

“ This *heraldry* in Lucrece’ face was seen,
 “ Argued by beauty’s red, and virtue’s white.”

This passage not affording us any assistance, we are next to consider one in *The Alchemist*, by Ben Jonson, which, if it alluded to an incident in *Othello*, (as Mr. Steevens seems to think it does,) would ascertain this play to have appeared before 1610, in which year *The Alchemist* was first acted :

“ *Lovewit*. Didst thou hear a cry, say’st thou ?

“ *Neighbb*. Yes, sir, like unto a man that had been strangled an hour, and could not speak.”

But I doubt whether *Othello* was here in Jonson’s contemplation. Old Ben generally spoke out ; and if he had intended to sneer at the manner of Desdemona’s death, I think, he would have taken care that his meaning should not be mis’d, and would have written—“ like unto a *woman*,” &c.

This tragedy was not entered on the books of the Stationers’ company, till Oct. 6, 1621, nor printed till the following year ; but it was acted at court early in the year 1613.³ How long before that time it had appeared, I have not been able to ascertain, either from the play itself, or from any contemporary production. I have, however, persuaded myself that it was one of Shakspeare’s latest performances : a supposition, to which the acknowledged excellence of the piece gives some degree of probability. It is here attributed to the year 1611, because Dr. Warburton’s comment on the

³ MS. Vertue.

passage above-cited may convince others, though, I confess, it does not satisfy me.

Emilia and *Lodovico*, two of the characters in this play, are likewise two of the persons represented in *May-day*, a comedy by Chapman, first printed in 1611.

34. THE TEMPEST, 1612.

Though some account of the Bermuda Islands, which are mentioned in this play, had been published in 1600, (as Dr. Farmer has observed,) yet as they were not generally known till Sir George Somers arrived there in 1609, *The Tempest* may be fairly attributed to a period subsequent to that year: especially as it exhibits such strong internal marks of having been a late production.

The entry at Stationers' hall does not contribute to ascertain the time of its composition; for it appears not on the Stationers' books, nor was it printed, till 1623, when it was published with the rest of our author's plays in folio: in which edition, having, I suppose by mere accident, obtained the first place, it has ever since preserved a station to which indubitably it is not entitled.⁴

As the circumstance from which this piece receives its name, is at an end in the very first scene, and as many other titles, all equally proper, might have occurred to Shakspeare, (such as *The Incanted Island*,—*The banished Duke*,—*Ferdinand and Miranda*, &c.) it is possible, that some particular and recent event determined him to call it *The Tempest*. It appears from Stowe's *Chronicle*, p. 913, that in the October, November, and December of the

⁴ See p. 579, article, *Cymbeline*.

year 1612, a dreadful tempest happened in England, "*which did exceeding great damage, with extreme shipwrack throughout the ocean.*" "*There perished*" (says the historian) "*above an hundred ships in the space of two houres.*"—Several pamphlets were published on this occasion, decorated with prints of sinking vessels, *castles toppling on their warders' heads*, the devil overturning steeples, &c. In one of them, the author describing the appearance of the waves at Dover, says, "*the whole seas appeared like a fiery world, all sparkling red.*" Another of these narratives recounts the escape of Edmond Pet, a sailor; whose preservation appears to have been no less marvellous than that of Trinculo or Stephano: and so great a terror did this tempest create in the minds of the people, that a form of prayer was ordered on the occasion, which is annexed to one of the publications above mentioned.

There is reason to believe that some of our author's dramas obtained their names from the seasons at which they were produced. It is not very easy to account for the title of *Twelfth Night*, but by supposing it to have been first exhibited in the Christmas holydays.⁵ Neither the title of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, nor that of *The Winter's Tale*, denotes the season of the action; the events which are the subject of the latter, occurring at

⁵ It was formerly an established custom to have plays represented at court in the Christmas holydays, and particularly on *Twelfth Night*. Two of Lyly's comedies (*Alexander and Campaspe*, 1584, and *Mydas*, 1592,) are said in their title-pages, to have been played befoore the queenes majestie on *Twelfe-day at night*; and several of Ben Jonson's masques were presented at Whitehall, on the same festival. Our author's *Love's Labour's Lost* was exhibited before Queen Elizabeth in the Christmas holydays; and his *King Lear* was acted before King James on St. Stephen's night: the night after Christmas-day.

the time of sheep-shearing, and the dream, from which the former receives its name, happening on the night preceding May-day.—These titles, therefore, were probably suggested by the season at which the plays were exhibited, to which they belong; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* having, we may presume, been first represented in June, and *The Winter's Tale* in December.

Perhaps then it may not be thought a very improbable conjecture, that this comedy was written in the summer of 1612, and produced on the stage in the latter end of that year; and that the author availed himself of a circumstance then fresh in the minds of his audience, by affixing a title to it, which was more likely to excite curiosity than any other that he could have chosen, while at the same time it was sufficiently justified by the subject of the drama.

Mr. Steevens, in his observations on this play, has quoted from the tragedy of *Darius* by the earl of Sterline, first printed in 1603, some lines⁶ so

- 6 “ Let greatness of her glassy scepters vaunt,
 “ Not scepters, no but reeds, soon bruis'd, soon broken,
 “ And let this worldly pomp our wits enchant,
 “ *All fades, and scarcely leaves behind a token.*
 “ Those golden *palaces*, those gorgeous halls,
 “ With furniture superfluously fair,
 “ Those stately courts, those *sky-encountering* walls,
 “ *Evanish all like vapours in the air.*”

Darius, Act III. edit. 1603.

- “ ——— These our actors,
 “ As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
 “ *Are melted into air, into thin air;*
 “ And, like the baseless fabrick of this vision,
 “ The *cloud-capt* tow'rs, the *gorgeous palaces*,
 “ The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 “ Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
 “ And, like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
 “ *Leave not a rack behind.*”

Tempest, Act IV. sc. i.

strongly resembling a celebrated passage in *The Tempest*, that one author must, I apprehend, have been indebted to the other. Shakspeare, I imagine, borrowed from lord Sterline.⁷

Mr. Holt conjectured,⁸ that the masque in the fifth act of this comedy was intended by the poet as a compliment to the earl of Essex, on his being united in wedlock, in 1611, to lady Frances Howard, to whom he had been contracted some years before.⁹ However this might have been, the date which that commentator has assigned to this play, (1614,) is certainly too late; for it appears from the MSS. of Mr. Vertue, that the *Tempest* was acted by John Heminge and the rest of the King's Company, before prince Charles, the lady Elizabeth, and the prince Palatine elector, in the beginning of the year 1613.

The names of *Trinculo* and *Antonio*, two of the characters in this comedy, are likewise found in that of *Albumazar*; which was printed in 1614, but is supposed by Dryden to have appeared some years before.

Ben Jonson probably meant to sneer at this play in the prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*, first printed in 1616, and probably written a few years before:

“ ——— nor tempestuous drum

“ Rumble to tell you when *the storm* will come.”

In the induction to his *Bartholomew Fair* he has

⁷ See note on *Julius Cæsar*, Act I. sc. i.

⁸ Observations on the *Tempest*, p. 67. Mr. Holt imagined, that lord Essex was united to lady Frances Howard in 1610; but he was mistaken: their union did not take place till the next year.

⁹ Jan. 5, 1606-7. The earl continued abroad four years from that time; so that he did not cohabit with his wife till 1611.

endeavoured to depreciate this beautiful comedy by calling it a *foolery*. Dryden, however, informs us that it was a very popular play at Blackfriars, but unluckily has not said a word relative to the time of its first representation there, though he might certainly have received information on that subject from Sir William D'Avenant.

The only note of time which I have observed in this play, is in Act II. sc. ii: "—— when they [the English] will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian." This probably alludes to some recent circumstance with which I am unacquainted.

35. TWELFTH NIGHT, 1614.

It has been generally believed, that Shakspeare retired from the theatre, and ceased to write, about three years before he died. The latter supposition must now be considered as extremely doubtful; for Mr. Tyrwhitt, with great probability, conjectures, that *Twelfth Night* was written in 1614: grounding his opinion on an allusion,² which it seems to contain, to those parliamentary *undertakers* of whom frequent mention is made in the Journals of the House of Commons for that year;³ who were stigmatized with the invidious name, on account of their having *undertaken* to manage the elections of knights and burgesses in such a manner as to secure a majority in parliament for the court. If this allusion was intended, *Twelfth Night* was probably our author's last production; and, we may

² "Nay, if you be an *undertaker*, I am for you." See *Twelfth Night*, Act IV. sc. iii. and the note there.

³ Comm. Journ. Vol. I. p. 456, 457, 470.

prefume, was written after he had retired to Stratford. It is observable that Mr. Ashley, a member of the House of Commons, in one of the debates on this subject, says, "that the rumour concerning these *undertakers* had spread into the *country*."

When Shakspeare quitted London and his profession, for the tranquillity of a rural retirement, it is improbable that such an excursive genius should have been immediately reconciled to a state of mental inactivity. It is more natural to conceive, that he should have occasionally bent his thoughts towards the theatre, which his muse had supported, and the interest of his associates whom he had left behind him to struggle with the capricious vicissitudes of publick taste, and whom, his last Will shews us, he had not forgotten. To the necessity, therefore, of literary amusement to every cultivated mind, or to the dictates of friendship, or to both these incentives, we are perhaps indebted for the comedy of *Twelfth Night*; which bears evident marks of having been composed at leisure, as most of the characters that it contains, are finished to a higher degree of dramattick perfection, than is discoverable in some of our author's earlier comick performances.⁴

In the third act of this comedy, Decker's *Westward Hoe* seems to be alluded to. *Westward Hoe* was printed in 1607, and from the prologue to *Eastward Hoe* appears to have been acted in 1604, or before.

Maria, in *Twelfth Night*, speaking of Malvolio, says, "he does smile his face into more lines than the *new* map with the augmentation of the Indies."

⁴ The comedies particularly alluded to, are, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

I have not been able to learn the date of the map here alluded to; but, as it is spoken of as a *recent* publication, it may, when discovered, serve to ascertain the date of this play more exactly.

The comedy of *What you will*, (the second title of the play now before us,) which was entered at Stationers' hall, Aug. 9, 1607, was certainly *Marsden's* play, as it was *printed* in that year for T. Thorpe, by whom the above mentioned entry was made; and it appears to have been the *general* practice of the bookfellers at that time, *recently before publication*, to enter those plays of which they had procured copies.

Twelfth Night was not registered on the Stationers' books, nor printed till 1623.

It has been thought, that Ben Jonson intended to ridicule the conduct of this play, in his *Every Man out of his Humour*, at the end of Act III. sc. vi. where he makes Mitis say,—“That the argument of his comedy might have been of some other nature, as of a duke to be in love with a countess, and that countess to be in love with the duke's son, and the son in love with the lady's waiting-maid: *some such cross wooing, with a clown to their serving-man*, better than be thus near and familiarly allied to the time.”

I do not, however, believe, that Jonson had here *Twelfth Night* in contemplation. If an allusion to this comedy were intended, it would ascertain it to have been written before 1599, when *Every Man out of his Humour* was first acted. But Meres does not mention *Twelfth Night* in 1598, nor is there any reason to believe that it then existed.

^s See the first note on *Twelfth Night*, Act. I. sc. i.

“Mrs. Mall’s picture,” which is mentioned in this play, probably means the picture of Moll Cutpurse, who was born in 1585, and made much noise in London about the year 1611.

The Sophy of Persia is twice mentioned in *Twelfth Night*. 1. “I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands to be paid by *the Sophy*.” 2. “He pays you as sure as your feet hit the ground you step on. They say he has been fencer to *the Sophy*.”

When Shakspeare wrote the first of these passages, he was perhaps thinking of Sir Robert Shirley, “who,” says Stowe’s Continuator, “after having served the Sophy of Persia for ten years as general of artillerie, and married the Lady Teresa, whose sister was one of the queens of Persia, arrived in England as ambassador from the *Sophy* in 1612. After staying one year he and his wife returned to Persia, (Jan. 1612-13,) leaving a son, to whom the queen was godmother, and Prince Henry godfather.”

Camden’s account agrees with this, for according to him Sir Robert Shirley came to England on his embassy, June 26, 1612: but both the accounts are erroneous; for Sir Robert Shirley certainly arrived in London as ambassador from the *Sophy* in 1611, as appears from a letter written by him to Henry prince of Wales, dated Nov. 4, 1611, requesting the prince to be god-father to his son.⁶ Sir Robert, and his Persian lady, at this time made much noise; and Shakspeare, it is highly probable, here alludes to the magnificence which he displayed during his stay in England, out of the funds allotted to him by the

⁶ MSS. Harl. 7008.

emperor of Persia. He remained in England about eighteen months.

If the dates here assigned to our author's plays should not, in every instance, bring with them conviction of their propriety, let it be remembered, that this is a subject on which conviction cannot at this day be obtained; and that the observations now submitted to the publick, do not pretend to any higher title than that of "AN ATTEMPT to ascertain the Chronology of the Dramas of Shakspeare."

Should the errors and deficiencies of this essay invite others to deeper and more successful researches, the end proposed by it will be attained: and he who offers the present arrangement of Shakspeare's dramas, will be happy to transfer the slender portion of credit that may result from the novelty of his undertaking, to some future claimant, who may be supplied with ampler materials, and endued with a superior degree of antiquarian sagacity.

To some, he is not unapprized, this inquiry will appear a tedious and barren speculation. But there are many, it is hoped, who think nothing which relates to the brightest ornament of the English nation, wholly uninteresting; who will be gratified by observing, how the genius of our great poet gradually expanded itself, till, like his own Ariel, *it flamed amazement* in every quarter, blazing forth with a lustre, that has not hitherto been equalled, and probably will never be surpassed.⁷ MALONE.

⁷ In the list of plays enumerated (p. 591,) by Mr. Malone as unpublished, he might have excepted two more of them which still remain in manuscript, viz. *The Queen of Corfica* and *The Bugbears*.

both also in the possession of the Marquis of Lansdowne. The following is the list of plays formerly in the possession of Mr. Warburton, copied from his MS. in the possession of the same nobleman :

- " *The honourable Loves*, by Will. Rowley.
- " *Henry the First*, by Will. Shakespear and Robert Davenport.
- " *The fair Favourite*.
- " *Minerva's Sacrifice*. Phill. Massinger.
- " *Duke Humphrey*. Will. Shakespear.
- " *Citty Shuffler*.
- " *Sir John Suckling's Workes*.
- " *Nothing impossible to Love*. T. P. Sir Rob. le Greece.
- " *The forc'd Lady*. T. Phill. Massinger.
- " *The Governor*, T. Sir Corn. Formido.
- " *The Lovers of Loodgate*.
- " *The flying Voice*, by R. Wood.
- " *The Mayden's Holaday*, by Christ. Marlowe.
- " *The Puritan Maid, the modest Wife, and the wanton Widow*,
by Tho. Middleton.
- " *The London Merchant*, a Comedy, by Jo. Ford.
- " *The King of Swedland*.*
- " *Love hath found out his Eyes*, by Tho. Jorden.
- " *Antonio and Vallia*, by Phill. Massinger.
- " *The Dutchess of Fernandina*. T. Henry Glapthorne.
- " *Jocondo and Astolfo*, by Tho. Decker.
- " *St. George for England*, by Will. Smithe.
- " *The Parliament of Love*, by Wm. Rowley.
- " *The Widow's Prize*. C. Will. Sampson.
- " *The inconstant Lady*. Wm. Wilfon.
- " *The Woman's Plott*. Phill. Massinger.
- " *The crafty Marshall*. C. Shack. Marmion.
- " *An Interlude*, by Ra. Wood. (worth nothing.)
- " *The Tyrant*, a Tragedy, by Phill. Massinger.
- " *The Nonesuch*, a C. Wm. Rowley.
- " *The Royal Combate*. C. By Jo. Forde.
- " *Philenzo and Hipolito*. C. Phill. Massinger.
- " *Beauty in a Trance*, Mr. Jo. Forde.
- " *The Judge*. C. By Phill. Massinger.
- " *A good Beginning may have a good End*, by Jo. Forde.
- " *Fast and welcome*, by Phill. Massinger.
- " *Believe as you list*. C. By Phill. Massinger.
- " *Hist. of Jobe*, by Robt. Green.
- " *The Vestall*, a Tragedy, by H. Glapthorne.
- " *Yorkshire Gentlewoman and her Sons*.
- " *The Honour of Women*. C. By P. Massinger.

* Query if not Dekker's *King of Swetbland*, entered on the Stationers' books, June 29, 1660.

- " *The noble Choice.* T. C. P. Massinger.
 " *A Mask.* R. Govell.
 " *Second Maiden's Tragedy.* George Chapman.
 " *The Great Man.*
 " *The Spanish Puechas.* C.
 " *The Queen of Corfica.* T. By F. Jaques.
 " *The Tragedy of Jobe.* (Good.)
 " *The Nobleman.* T. C. Cyrill Tourneur.
 " *A Play by Will. Shakspeare.*
 " *Bugbears.* C. Jo. Geffrey.
 " *Orpheus.* C.
 " *'Tis good sleeping in a whole Skin.* W. Wager.
 " *Fairy Queen.*

" After I had been many years collecting these MS. plays, through my own carelessness and the ignorance of my servant in whose hands I had lodged them, they were unluckily burn'd, or put under pyc-bottoms, excepting the three which follow :

- " *Second Maiden's Tragedy.*
 " *Bugbears.*
 " *Queen of Corfica.** J. Warburton."

REED.

* Now in the library of the Marquis of Lansdowne.

SHAKSPEARE, FORD, AND JONSON.

— ubi nulla fugam reperit fallacia, victus,
In sese redit. VIRG.

I HAVE long had great doubts concerning the authenticity of the facts mentioned in a letter printed in Vol. II. p. 502, giving a pretended extract from a pamphlet of the last age, entitled “Old Ben’s *Light Heart* made heavy by young John’s *Melancholy Lover*,” containing some anecdotes of Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, and John Ford, the dramattick poet; and suspected that the plausible tale which the writer of the letter alluded to has told, was an innocent forgery, fabricated for the purpose of aiding a benefit, and making the town believe that *The Lover’s Melancholy* came from the mint of Shakspeare. Some additional information on this subject, which I have lately obtained, appears to me so decisively to confirm and establish my opinion, that I shall here, though somewhat out of place, devote a few pages to the examination of this question.

Having always thought with indignation on the tastelessness of the scholars of that age in preferring Jonson to Shakspeare after the death of the latter, I did not find myself much inclined to dispute the authenticity of a paper, which, in its general tenour, was conformable to my own notions: but the love of truth ought ever to be superior to such considerations. Our poet’s fame is fixed upon a basis *as broad and general as the casing air*, and stands in no need of such meretricious aids as the pen of fiction may be able to furnish. However, before I entered on this discussion, I thought it incumbent

on me to apply to Mr. Macklin, the author of the letter in question, upon the subject: but his memory is so much impaired, (he being now in the ninety-first year of his age,) that he scarcely recollects having written such a letter, much less the circumstances attending it. I ought, however, to add, that I had some conversation with him a few years ago upon the same topick, and then strongly urged to him that no kind of disgrace could attend his owning that this letter was a mere *jeu d'esprit*, written for an occasional harmless purpose: but he persisted in asserting that the pamphlet of which he has given an account, (for which I in vain offered by a publick advertisement, continued for some time in the newspapers, to pay two guineas, and of which no copy has been found in any publick or private library in the course of forty years,) was once in his possession; was printed in quarto, and bound up with several small political tracts of the same period; and was lost with a large collection of old plays and other books, on the coast of Ireland, in the year 1760. I cannot therefore boast, *habeo confitentem reum*. However, let the point be tried by those rules of evidence which regulate trials of greater importance; and I make no doubt that I shall be able to produce such testimony as shall convict our veteran comedian of having, sportively, ingeniously, and falsely, (though with no malice afore-thought,) invented and fabricated the narrative given in the letter already mentioned, contrary to the Statute of Biography, and other wholesome laws of the Parnassian Code, in this case made and provided, for the security of the rights of authors, and the greater certainty and authenticity of dramattick history.

Nor let our poet's admirers be at all alarmed, or shrink from this discussion; for after this slight and

temporary fabrick, erected to his honour, shall have been demolished, there will still remain abundant proofs of the gentleness, modesty, and humility, of Shakspeare; of the overweening arrogance of old Ben; and of the ridiculous absurdity of his partizans, who for near a century set *above* our great dramatick poet a writer whom no man is now hardy enough to mention as even his competitor.

I must premise, that *The Lover's Melancholy*, written by John Ford, was *announced* for representation at Drury-lane theatre on Friday the 22d of April, 1748. Mr. Steevens has mentioned that it was performed for *a benefit*; but the person for whose benefit this play was acted is in the present case very material: it was performed *for the benefit of Mrs. Macklin*; and consequently it was the *interest* of Mr. Macklin that the entertainment of that night should prove profitable, or in other words that such expectation should be raised among the frequenters of the play-house as should draw together a numerous audience. Mr. Macklin, who had then been on the stage about twenty-five years, was sufficiently conversant with the arts of puffing, which, though now practised with perhaps superior dexterity, have at all times (by whatever name they may have gone) been tolerably well understood: and accordingly on Tuesday the 19th of April, three days before the day appointed for his wife's benefit, he inserted the following letter in *The General* (now *The Publick*) *Advertiser*, which appears to have escaped the notice of my predecessor:

‘ Sir,

‘ As *The Lover's Melancholy*, which is to be revived on *Friday* next at the theatre-royal in Drury-

Lane, for the benefit of Mrs. Macklin, is a scarce play, and in a very few hands, it is hoped, that a short account of the author, his works in general, and of that piece in particular, will not be unacceptable to the publick.'

' John Ford, Esq. was of the Middle Temple, and though but a young man when Shakspeare left the stage, yet as he lived in strict friendship with him till he died, *which appears by several of Ford's sonnets and verses*, it may be said with some propriety that he was a contemporary of that great man's.'

' It is said that he wrote twelve or fourteen dramatick pieces, eight of which only have been collected, viz. *The Broken Heart, Love's Sacrifice, Perkin Warbeck, The Ladies' Trial, 'Tis Pity she's a Whore, The Sun's Darling*, a Masque, and *The Lover's Melancholy*.'

' Most of those pieces have great merit in them, particularly *The Lover's Melancholy*; which in the private opinion of many admirers of the stage, is written with an art, ease, and dramatick spirit, inferior to none before or since his time, Shakspeare excepted.'

' The moral of this play is obvious and laudable; the fable natural, simple, interesting, and perfect in all its parts; the action one and entire; the time twelve hours, and the place a palace.'

' The writing, as the piece is of that species of the drama, which is neither tragedy, nor comedy, but a play, is often in familiar, and sometimes in elevated, prose, *after the manner of Shakspeare*; but when his subject and characters demand it, he has sentiment, diction, and flowing numbers, at command.'

' His characters are natural, and well chosen, and so distinct in manners, sentiment, and language,

that each as he speaks would distinctly live in the reader's judgment, without the common help of marginal directions.'

'As Ford was an intimate and a professed admirer of Shakspeare, it is not to be wondered at, that *he often thinks and expresses like him*; which is not his misfortune, but his happiness; for when he is most like Shakspeare, he is most like nature. He does not put you in mind of him like a plagiarist, or an affected mere imitator; but like a true genius, who had studied under that great man, and could not avoid catching some of his divine excellence.'

'This praise perhaps by some people may be thought too much: of that the praiser pretends not to be a judge; he only speaks his own feeling, not with an intent to impose, but to recommend a treasure to the publick, that for a century has been buried in obscurity; which *when they have seen*, he flatters himself that they will think as well of it as he does; and should that be the case, the following verses, written by Mr. Ford's contemporaries, will shew, that neither the present publick, nor the letter-writer, are singular in their esteem of *The Lover's Melancholy*.'

" To my honoured friend, Master JOHN FORD, on his [excellent play, *The*] ⁸ *Lover's Melancholy*.

" If that thou think'st these lines thy worth can raise,
 " Thou dost mistake; my liking is no praise:
 " Nor can I think thy judgment is so ill,
 " To seek for bays from such a barren quill.
 " Let your true critick that can judge and mend,
 " Allow thy scenes, and stile: I, as a friend

⁸ The words within crotchets here and below were interpolated by Mr. Macklin, not being found in the original.

“ That knows thy worth, do only stick my name,
 “ To shew my love, not to advance thy fame.”

“ G. DONNE.”

On [that excellent play] *The Lover's Melancholy*.

“ 'Tis not the language, nor the fore-plac'd rhimes
 “ Of friends that shall commend to after-times
 “ *The Lover's Melancholy*; its own worth
 “ Without a borrow'd praise shall set it forth.”

PHILOS.⁹

“ Your's, B. B.”

How far *The Lover's Melancholy* is entitled to all this high praise, it is not my business at present to inquire. I shall only observe, that this kind of prelude to a benefit play appears at that period to have been a common artifice. For *The Muses Looking-Glass*, an old comedy of Randolph's, being revived for the benefit of Mr. Ryan in 1748, I find an account of the author, and an high elogium on his works, in the form of a letter, inserted in the month of March, in the same newspaper.

In the preceding letter it is observable, we are only told that the author of *The Lover's Melancholy* lived in the strictest intimacy with Shakspeare till he died, *as appears by several of Ford's Sonnets and Verses* (which unluckily, however, *are no where to be found*); that the piece is inferior to none written before or since, except those of Shakspeare; that as Ford was an intimate and professed admirer of Shakspeare, and had studied under him, it is not to be wondered at that it should be written *in his*

⁹ In the original, this signature is in Greek characters, Ο Φίλος; a language with which Mr. Macklin is unacquainted. In this instance therefore he must have had the assistance of some more learned friend.

manner, and that the author should have caught some portion of his divine excellence: but no hint is yet given, that *The Lover's Melancholy* had a still higher claim to the attention of the town than being written in Shakspeare's manner, namely its being supposed to be compiled from the papers of that great poet, which, after his death, as we shall presently hear, fell into Ford's hands. And yet undoubtedly this valuable piece of information was on Monday the 21st day of April, (when this letter appears to have been written,) in Mr. Macklin's possession, *if ever he was possessed of it*; for so improbable a circumstance will not, I suppose, be urged, as that he found the uncommon pamphlet in which it is said to be contained, between that day and the following Friday.

Judiciously as the preceding letter was calculated to attain the end for which it was written, it appears not to have made a sufficient impression on the publick. All the boxes for Mrs. Macklin's benefit, it should seem, were not yet taken; and the town was not quite so anxious as might have been expected, to see this transcendent and incomparable secular tragedy; though it was announced in the bills as not having been performed for one hundred years; though its moral, fable, and action, were all perfect and entire; though the time consumed in the drama was as little as the most rigid French critick could exact: and though the audience during the whole representation would enjoy the supreme felicity of beholding not a forest, an open plain, or a common room, but the inside of a palace. What then was to be done? An ordinary application having failed, Spanish flies are to be tried; for though the publick might not go to see a play *written in the manner of Shakspeare*, they could not be so insensible as not to have some cu-

riosity about a piece, which, if the insinuations of the author's contemporaries were to be credited, was *actually written by him*; a play, which none of them had ever seen represented, and very few had read or even heard of. Mr. Barry, a principal performer in this revived tragedy, is very *commodiously* taken ill; and the representation, which had been announced for Friday the 22d, is deferred to Thursday the 28th, of April. Full of the new idea, the letter-writer takes up his pen; but fabricks of this kind are not easily constructed, so as to be secure on every side from assault. However, in three days the whole structure was raised; and on Saturday morning the 23d of April appeared in *The General Advertiser* a Second Eulogy on *The Lover's Melancholy*, which I am now to examine.

This letter of the 23d of April which we are now to consider, being printed in a subsequent page,² the reader can easily turn to it. Before, however, I enter upon an examination of its contents, I will just observe, that the attention of the publick had been drawn in a peculiar manner to our author's productions by the publication of Dr. Warburton's long expected edition of his plays in the preceding year, and was still more strongly fixed on the same object by Mr. Edwards's ingenious *Canons of Criticism*, which first appeared in the month of April, 1748.

Mr. Macklin begins his second letter with the mention of a pamphlet written in the reign of Charles the First, with this quaint title—"Old Ben's *Light Heart* made heavy by young John's *Melancholy Lover*;" and as this curious pamphlet contains "some historical anecdotes and altercations con-

² See p. 502. Vol. II.

cerning Ben Jonson, Ford, Shakspeare, and *The Lover's Melancholy*," he makes no doubt that a few extracts from it will "*at this juncture*" be acceptable to the publick.

He next observes, that Ben Jonson from great critical language, (*learning*, he should have said,) which was then the portion of but very few, from his merit as a poet, and his association with men of letters, for a considerable time gave laws to the stage. That old Ben was splenetick, sour, and envious; too proud of his own works, and too severe in his censure of those of his contemporaries. That this arrogance raised him many enemies, who were particularly offended by the *slights* and *malig-nancies* which the *rigid* Ben threw out against the *lowly Shakspeare*, "whose fame, *since his death*, as appears by the pamphlet, was grown too great for Ben's envy either to bear with or wound."

To give the whole of these invectives, we are then told, would take up too much room; but among other instances of Jonson's ill-nature and ingratitude to Shakspeare, "who first introduced him to the theatre and to fame," it is stated, *from the pamphlet*, that Ben had asserted, that Shakspeare had indeed wit and imagination, but that they were not guided by judgment, being ever servile to raise the laughter of fools and the wonder of the ignorant; that he had little Latin, and less Greek: and the writer of the pamphlet, as a further proof of Ben's malignity, quotes some lines from the prologue to *Every man in his humour*,—

"To make a child new swaddled, to proceed
 "Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,
 "Past threescore years," &c.

which were levelled at some of Shakspeare's plays. The first of the lines quoted, and above given, we

are told in a note, was pointed at *The Winter's Tale*; but whether this note was furnished by the pamphlet or by the writer of the letter, we are left to conjecture. Whichsoever of these we are to suppose, the fact is undoubtedly not true; for the new-born child introduced in *The Winter's Tale* never does in the course of the play shoot up *man*, being no other than the lovely Perdita. In the following lines however of that prologue, our poet is undoubtedly sneered at.

So much for Shakspeare. We are now brought to *The Lover's Melancholy*; the extraordinary success of which, the pamphlet informs us, wounded Ben the more sensibly, as it was brought out on the same stage, and *in the same week*, with his *New Inn* or *Light Heart*, which was damned; and as Ford, the writer of *The Lover's Melancholy*, was at the head of Shakspeare's partizans. The ill success of the *Light Heart*, we are next told, so incensed Jonson, that, when he printed his play, he described it in the title-page, as a comedy *never acted, but most negligently played by some, the king's idle servants, and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others, the king's foolish subjects*; and immediately upon this, adds the letter-writer, he wrote his famous ode, "Come, leave the loathed stage," &c. The revenge which he took on Ford, was, we are told, (from the pamphlet,) the writing an epigram upon him, in which there is an allusion, as we are informed in a note, to a character in a play of Ford's "which Ben says, Ford stole from him."

The next information which we derive from this curious pamphlet, is entirely new, no trace of it being found in the preface prefixed by the first editors to the folio edition of Shakspeare's plays in 1623, or in any other book of those times. This curious

fact is, that John Ford, in conjunction with our poet's friends, Heminge and Condell, had the revival of his papers after his death; and that Ben asserted, Ford's *Lover's Melancholy*, by the connivance of his associates in this trust, was stolen from those papers. This malicious charge gave birth, we are told, to many verses and epigrams, which are set forth in the pamphlet, but the letter-writer contents himself with producing two copies of these verses only,³ to one of which is subscribed the name of *Thomas May*, and to the other these words: "*Endim. Porter*, the supposed author of these verses."

Such is the substance of Mr. Macklin's second letter. Let us now separately examine the parts of which it is composed.

The quaint title which the writer of this letter has given to this creature of his own imagination, (for so I shall now take leave to call the pamphlet,) "*Old Ben's Light Heart made heavy by young John's Melancholy Lover*," is, it must be acknowledged, most happily invented, and is so much in the manner of those times, that it for a long time staggered my incredulity, and almost convinced me of the authenticity of the piece to which it is said to have been affixed; and not a little, without doubt, did the inventor plume himself on so fortunate a thought. But how short-sighted is man! This very title, which the writer thus probably exulted in, and supposed would serve him,

"—— as a charmed shield,

"And eke enchanted arms that none might pierce,"

³ Of all the ancient poems which Chatterton pretended to have found in the famous Bristol chest, he wisely produced, I think, but *four*, that he ventured to call originals.

is one of the most decisive circumstances to prove his forgery.

“ Nescia mens hominum fati, fortisque futuræ !

“ Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum

“ Intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista, diemque

“ Oderit.—

“ ——— Pallas te, hoc vulnere, Pallas

“ Immolat, et pœnam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.”

Ben Jonson was in his own time frequently called the *judicious* Ben, the *learned* Ben, the *immortal* Ben, but had not, I believe, at the time this pamphlet is supposed to have been published, obtained the appellation of *Old Ben*. However, as this title was given him some years afterwards by Sir John Suckling in his *Session of the Poets*, which appears to have been written in August 1637, about the time of Jonson's death, (See Strafford's Lett. Vol. II. p. 114,) which celebrated poem, as well as the language of the present day, probably suggested the combination of *Old Ben* to Mr. Macklin, I shall lay no stress upon this objection. But the other part of the title of this pamphlet—“ *Young John's Melancholy Lover*,” is very material in the present disquisition.—John Ford in the Dedication to his *Lover's Melancholy* says, that was the first *play* which he had *printed*; from which the letter-writer concluded that he must then have been a young man. In this particular, however, he was egregiously mistaken; for John Ford, who was the second son of Thomas Ford, Esq. was born at Ilfington in Devonshire, and baptized there April 17, 1586.⁴ When he was not yet seventeen, he became a member of the Middle-Temple, November 16, 1602, as I learn from the Register of

⁴ For this information I am indebted to the Reverend Mr. Palk, Vicar of Ilfington.

that Society; and consequently in the year 1631, when this pamphlet is supposed to have been published, he had no title to the appellation of *young John*, being forty-five years old. And though *The Lover's Melancholy* was the first play that he published, he had produced the Masque of *The Sun's Darling* on the stage five years before, namely, in March, 1623-4; had exhibited one or more plays before that time; and so early as in the year 1606 had published a poem entitled *Fame's Memorial*, of which I have his original presentation-copy in MS. in my collection. These are facts, of the greater part of which no writer of that time, conversant with dramatick history, could have been ignorant. Here certainly I might safely close the evidence; for Ben Jonson was born on the 11th of June, 1574,*

* According to the best accounts. The precise year however of this poet's birth has not been ascertained. Fuller tells us, that "with all his industry he could not find him in his cradle, but that he could fetch him from his long coats;—when a little child, he lived in Hartshorne-lane near Charing-Cross." I in vain examined the Register of St. Margaret's, Westminster, and St. Martin's in the Fields, for the time of his baptism. There is a *lacuna* in the latter register from February to Dec. 1574. Ben Jonson therefore was probably born in that year, and he has himself told us that he was born on the 11th of June. This agrees with the account given by Anthony Wood, who says, that before his death in August 1637, he had completed his sixty-third year. I found in the Register of St. Martin's, that a Mrs. Margaret Jonson was married in November 1575 to Mr. Thomas Fowler. He was perhaps the poet's step-father, who is said to have been a bricklayer.

The greater part of the history of this poet's life is involved in much confusion. Most of the facts which have been transmitted concerning him, were originally told by Anthony Wood; and there is scarcely any part of his narrative in which some error may not be traced. Thus, we are told, that soon after his father's death his mother married a bricklayer; that she took her son from Westminster-school, and made him work at his step-father's trade. He helped, says Fuller, at the building of the new structure in Lincoln's-Inn, where having a trowel in his hand, he had a book in his

and consequently in 1631 was in his fifty-seventh year; a period of life at which, though not in the

pocket: and this book Mr. Gildon has found out to be *Horace*. In this situation, according to Wood, being pitied by his old master, Camden, he was recommended to Sir Walter Raleigh as a tutor to his son; and after attending him on his adventures, they parted, on his return, not, as I think, says Wood, in cold blood. He *then*, we are told, was admitted into St. John's college in Cambridge, and after a short stay there, went to London, and became an actor in the Curtain playhouse: and soon afterwards, "having improved his fancy by keeping scholastick company, he betook himself to writing plays." Lastly, we are told by the same writer, on the death of Daniel [in October 1619] "he succeeded him as poet-laureat, as Daniel succeeded Spenser."

If Jonson ever worked with his step-father at his trade in Lincoln's-Inn, it must have been either in 1588, or 1593, in each of which years, as I learn from Dugdale's *Origines Judiciales*, some new buildings were erected by that society. He could not have been taken from thence to accompany young Raleigh on his travels, who was not born till 1594, nor ever went abroad except with his father in 1617 to Guiana, where he lost his life. The poet might indeed about the year 1610 or 1611 have been private tutor to him; and it is probable that their connexion was about that time, as Jonson mentions that he furnished Sir Walter Raleigh with a portion of his History of the World, on which Sir Walter must have been then employed; but if the tutor and the pupil then parted in ill humour, it was rather too late for Jonson to enter into St. John's college, at the age of thirty-four or thirty-five years.

That at some period he was tutor to young Raleigh, is ascertained by the following anecdote, preserved in one of Oldys's Manuscripts:

"Mr. Camden recommended him to Sir Walter Raleigh, who trusted him with the care and education of his eldest son Walter, a gay spark, who could not brook Ben's rigorous treatment, but perceiving one foible in his disposition, made use of that to throw off the yoke of his government: and this was an unlucky habit Ben had contracted, through his love of jovial company, of being overtaken with liquor, which Sir Walter did of all vices most abominate, and hath most exclaimed against. One day, when Ben had taken a plentiful dose, and was fallen into a sound sleep, young Raleigh got a great basket, and a couple of men, who lay'd Ben in it, and then with a pole carried him between their shoulders to Sir Walter, telling him, their young master had sent home his tutor." This, adds

hey-day of the blood, he could with no great propriety be called *Old*, unless by way of opposition to

Mr. Oldys, "I have from a MS. memorandum-book written in the time of the civil wars, by Mr. Oldisworth, who was secretary, I think, to Philip earl of Pembroke,"

The truth probably is, that he was admitted into St. John's college as a sizar in 1588, at which time he was fourteen years old, (the usual time then of going to the University,) and after staying there a few weeks was obliged from poverty to return to his father's trade; with whom he might have been employed on the buildings in Lincoln's Inn in 1593, when he was nineteen. Not being able to endure his situation, he went, as he himself told Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, to the Low Countries, where he served a campaign, and distinguished himself in the field. On his return, perhaps in 1594, being now used to a life of adventure, he probably began his theatrical career, as a strolling player, and after having "rambled for some time by a play-waggon in the country," repaired to London, and endeavoured at the Curtain to obtain a livelihood as an actor, till, as Decker informs us, "not being able to set a *good face* upon't, he could not get a service among the mimicks."

Between that year and 1598, when *Every Man in his Humour* was acted, he probably produced those unsuccessful pieces which Wood mentions. It is remarkable that Meres in that year enumerates Jonson among the writers of *tragedy*, though no tragedy of his writing, of so early a date, is now extant: a fact which none of his biographers have noticed.

Some particulars relative to this poet, which I have lately learned, will serve to disprove another of the facts mentioned by Wood; namely, that "he succeeded Daniel as poet-laureat, [in October 1619,] as Daniel did Spenser." I do not believe that any such office as poet-laureat existed in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and consequently Spenser never could have possessed it; nor has any proof whatsoever been produced of Daniel's having ever enjoyed that office.

Spenser, we are told by Camden, died in great poverty in 1598, and such has been the prevailing opinion ever since; but a fact which I have lately discovered, and which has not been noticed by any writer of that great poet's life, renders Camden's assertion very disputable. Spenser, I find, in February 1590-1, obtained from queen Elizabeth an annuity or pension of fifty pounds a year, during his life; which, the value of money and the modes of life being jointly considered, may be estimated as equal to two hundred pounds a year at this day. We see, therefore, that the incense lavished on his parsimonious mistress in the *Faery Queen*, which was published

a *very young* man. But no such difference of age subsisted between these two poets. If a man of

in the preceding year,* did not pass unrewarded, as all our biographical writers have supposed. The first notice I obtained of this grant, was from a short abstract of it in the Signet-office, and with a view to ascertain whether he was described as poet-laureat. I afterwards examined the patent itself, (*Patent Roll*, 33 Eliz. P. 3.) but no office or official duty is there mentioned. After the usual and formal preamble, *pro diversis causis et considerationibus*, &c. the words are, "*damus et concedimus dilecto subdito nostro, Edmundo Spenser,*" &c.

King James by letters patent dated February 3, 1615-16, granted to Ben Jonson an annuity or yearly pension of one hundred marks, during his life, "*in consideration of the good and acceptable service heretofore done, and hereafter to be done by the said B. J.*" Then therefore, and not in 1619, undoubtedly it was that he was made poet-laureat, if ever he was so constituted; but not one word is there in the grant, which I examined in the chapel of the Rolls, touching that office: unless it may be supposed to be comprehended in the words which I have just quoted. On the 23d of April, 1630, King Charles by letters patent, reciting the former grant, and that it had been surrendered, was pleased, "*in consideration (says the patent) of the good and acceptable service done unto us and our said father by the said B. J. and especially to encourage him to proceed in those services of his wit and pen, which we have enjoined unto him, and which we expect from him,*" to augment his annuity of one hundred marks, to one hundred pounds *per ann.* during his life, payable from Christmas, 1629, and the first payment to commence at Lady-day, 1630. Charles at the same time granted him a tierce of Canary Spanish wine yearly during his life, out of his majesty's cellars at Whitehall: of which there is no mention in the former grant. From hence, and from the present of one hundred pounds sent to Jonson by the king in 1629, we may see how extremely improbable the story is, which has been recorded, on I know not what authority, and which Dr. Smollet was idle enough to insert in his History; that Ben in that year, being reduced to great distress, and living in an obscure alley, petitioned his majesty to assist him in his poverty and sickness; and on receiving ten guineas, said to the messenger who brought him the donation, "*his majesty has sent me ten guineas, because I am poor and live in an alley; go and tell him, that his soul lives in an alley.*"

* *The Faery Queen* was entered on the Stationers' books by W. Ponsonby, in December, 1589.

fifty-seven is to be accounted old, the man of forty-five is not young.

The next suspicious circumstance in the letter which we are now examining, is, that in the pretended extracts from this old pamphlet most of the circumstances mentioned might have been collected by a modern writer from books of either those or subsequent times: and such *new* facts as are mentioned, can be proved to be fictions. Such of the pretended extracts as are true, are old; and such as are new, are false. Thus, to take the former class first, we are informed, (as from the pam-

None of his biographers appear to have known that Ben Jonson obtained from King James a reversionary grant of the office of Master of the Revels. His majesty by letters patent dated October 5, in the nineteenth year of his reign, (1621,) granted him, by the name and addition of "our beloved servant, Benjamin Jonson, *gentleman*," the said office, to be held and enjoyed by him and his assigns, during his life, from and after the death of Sir George Buck and Sir John Astley, or as soon as the office should become vacant by resignation, forfeiture, or surrender: but Jonson never derived any advantage from this grant, because Sir John Astley survived him. It should seem from a passage in the *Satiromastix* of his antagonist Decker, printed in 1602, that Ben had made some attempt to obtain a reversionary grant of this place before the death of Queen Elizabeth: for *Sir Vaughan* in that piece says to *Horace*, [i. e. Jonson,] "I have some coffens-german at court shall beget you the *reversion* of the *Master of the King's Revels*, or else to be his Lord of Misrule nowe at Christmas."

It has been commonly understood, that on Ben Jonson's death in August 1637, Sir William D'Avenant [then Mr. D'Avenant] was appointed poet-laureate in his room: but he at that time received no favour from the crown. Sixteen months afterwards, Dec. 13, 1638, in the 14th year of Charles the First, letters patent passed the great seal, granting, "in consideration of service heretofore done and hereafter to be done by William Davenant, gentleman," an annuity of one hundred pounds *per Ann.* to the said W. D. *during his majesty's pleasure*. By this patent no Canary wine was granted; and no mention is made of the office of poet-laureate. It is at present conferred, not by letters patent, but by a warrant signed and sealed by the Lord Chamberlain, nominating A. B. to the office, with the accustomed fees thereunto belonging.

phlet,) that our poet and Jonson were at variance; that old Ben took every means of depreciating the lowly Shakspeare; that he asserted our poet had little Latin, and less Greek, and did not understand the dramatick laws;⁵ that Jonson ridiculed some of his pieces; and that this was a strong proof of his ingratitude, Shakspeare having first introduced him to the stage.—All these facts Mr. M. might have learned from Rowe's Life of Shakspeare, and Pope's Preface to his edition; from Dr. Birch's Life of Ben Jonson published in 1743; from Drummond of Hawthornden's Conversation with that poet; from the old play entitled *The Return from Parnassus*; from Fuller's *Worthies*, Winstanley, and Langbaine; from Jonson's own verses on Shakspeare prefixed to all the editions; from his prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*; from his *Bartholomew Fair* and his *Discoveries*; and from many other books. In Mr. Pope's preface was found that praise, that in our poet's plays every speech might be assigned to its proper speaker without the aid of marginal directions: an encomium which perhaps is too high, even when applied to Shakspeare; but which, when applied to Ford, (as it is in Mr. Macklin's *first* letter,) becomes ridiculous.

Let us now consider the *new* facts, which for the first time are given to the publick from this rare old tract. The first new fact stated is, that Shakspeare's fame, *after his death*, grew too great for

⁵ Which Ben claimed the merit of having first taught his contemporaries. See his Verses to his old servant Richard Brome, prefixed to *The Northern Lass*, which was first acted in July, 1629:

“ Now you are got into a nearer room
 “ Of fellowship, professing my old arts,
 “ And you do do them well, with good applause;
 “ Which you have justly gained from the stage,
 “ By observation of those *comick laws*
 “ Which I, your master, *first did teach the age.*”

Ben either to bear with or wound. Now this was so far from being the case, that it was at this particular period that Jonson's pieces, which were collected into a volume in 1616, appear to have been in most estimation; and from the time of Shakspeare's death to the year 1625, both Ben's fame and that of Fletcher, seem to have been at their height. In this period Fletcher produced near thirty plays, which were acted with applause; and Jonson was during the whole of that time well received in the courts of James and Charles, for each of whom he wrote several Masques, which the wretched taste of that age very highly estimated; and was patronized and extravagantly extolled by the scholars of the time, as much superior to Shakspeare. In this period also he produced his *Devil's an Ass*, and his *Staple of News*, each of which had some share of success. In the year 1631 indeed he was extremely indigent and distressed, and had been so from the year 1625, when I think he was struck with the palsy; but in consequence of this indigence and distress he was not precisely at that period an object of jealousy to the partizans of Shakspeare.

Another and a very material false fact stated from this pamphlet is, that Jonson's *New Inn or Light Heart*, and Ford's *Melancholy Lover*, were produced for the first time on the same stage, in *the same week*: a fact concerning which the writer of the pamphlet, *if the pamphlet had any real existence*, could scarcely have been mistaken.

These two plays were certainly represented for the first time at *the same theatre*, namely Blackfriars, as Mr. Macklin learned from their respective title-pages; but not in *the same week*, there being no less than *two months* interval between the production of the two pieces.

Ford's play was exhibited at the Blackfriars on the 24th of November, 1628, when it was licensed for the stage, as appears from the Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King Charles the First, a manuscript now before me, of which a more particular account may be found in Vol. II. [*Historical Account of the English Stage, &c.*]; and Jonson's *New Inn* on the 19th of January in the following year, 1628-9. Very soon indeed after the ill success of Jonson's piece, the King's Company brought out at the same theatre a new play called *The Love-sick Maid, or the Honour of young Ladies*, which was licensed by Sir Henry Herbert, on the 9th of February, 1628-9, and acted with extraordinary applause. This play, which was written by Jonson's own servant, Richard Brome, was so popular, that the managers of the King's Company, on the 10th of March, presented the Master of the Revels with the sum of two pounds, "on the good success of *The Honour of Ladies*;" the only instance I have met with of such a compliment being paid him. No mention whatsoever is made of *The Lover's Melancholy* having been attended with any extraordinary success, though Mr. M. from private motives chose to represent it as having been acted with uncommon applause.

We are next told, that Ben was so exasperated by the damnation of his piece, that he printed it with a very singular title-page, which is given; and that *immediately upon this* he wrote his celebrated Ode, "Come, leave the loathed stage," &c. It is not very clear what the letter-writer means by the words, *immediately upon this*. If he means that Jonson wrote his Ode immediately after his play was damned in 1629, the assertion is made at random; if he means that immediately after he had published his play he wrote his ode, the fact is not

true. The ode is printed at the end of the play, which was published in April, 1631.

The next new fact found in this curious pamphlet is, that Ben Jonson, mortified by his own defeat and the success which Ford's play obtained, wrote the following Epigram upon his successful competitor:

“PLAYWRIGHT, by chance, hearing some toys I had writ,
 “Cry'd to my face, they were th' elixir of wit;
 “And I must now believe him, for to-day
 “Five of my jests, then stolne, pass'd him a play.”

This epigram, I own, is so much in the manner of the time, and particularly of Ben Jonson, that for a long time I knew not how to question its authenticity. It is so strongly marked, that every poetical reader must immediately exclaim, *aut Erasmus, aut diabolus*. Nor indeed is it to be wondered at that it is much in Ben's manner; for,—not to keep the reader longer in suspense, it *was* written by him.—Well then, says the writer of the letter in question, here you have a strong confirmation of all the other facts which you affect to doubt, and every impartial judge must acquit me of having fabricated them. This, however, we shall find a *non sequitur*: for this very epigram, though written by Jonson, is as decisive a proof of imposition as any other which I have produced. The fact is, this epigram, addressed to PLAYWRIGHT, is found among Jonson's printed poems, as are two others addressed to the same person.⁶ Mr. M. I

⁶ See Jonson's Works, folio, 1616:

Epig. XLIX.

TO PLAYWRIGHT.

“PLAYWRIGHT me reades, and still my verses damnes;
 “He sayes, I want the tongue of epigrammes;

suppose, was possessed only of the modern edition of Jonson's Works printed in 8vo. in 1716, and, no dates being assigned to the *poems*, thought he might safely make free with this epigram, and affix the date of the year 1630, or 1631, to it; but unluckily it was published by Old Ben himself fourteen or fifteen years before, in the first folio collection of his works in 1616, and consequently could not have any relation to a literary altercation between him and Ford at the time *The New Inn* and *The Lover's Melancholy* were brought on the scene. It appears from Ben Jonson's Dedication of his Epigrams to Lord Pembroke, that most of them, though published in 1616, were written some years before;¹ the epigram in question therefore may be referred to a still earlier period than the time of its publication.

On one of the lines in this epigram, as exhibited by Mr. Macklin,

" I have no salt; no bawdrie he doth meane,
 " For wittie, in his language, is obscene.
 " PLAYWRIGHT, I loath to have thy manners knowne
 " In my chaste booke: professe them in thine owne."

Epig. LXVIII.

ON PLAYWRIGHT.

" PLAYWRIGHT, convict of publick wrongs to men,
 " Takes private beatings, and begins againe.
 " Two kindes of valour he doth shew at ones,
 " Active in his braine, and passive in his bones."

The person aimed at, under the name of *Playwright*, was probably Decker.

¹ " I here offer to your lordship the *ripest* of my studies, my epigrammes, which, though they carry danger in the sound, do not therefore seek your shelter. For *when I made them*, I had nothing in my conscience, to expressing of which I did need a cypher. But if I be false into *those times*, wherein, for the likeness of vice," &c.

“ Five of my jests, then stolne, pass’d him a play.”

we find the following note:—“ Alluding to a character in *The Ladies’ Trial*, which Ben says Ford stole from him.” If the writer of this letter had said, “ Alluding to a character in *The Ladies’ Trial*, which Ford stole from Ben Jonson,” we might suppose him only mistaken; and this anachronism (supposing that the epigram had been written in 1631) might not affect the present question. But we are told, “ *Ben* says so.” He certainly has not said so in his works, and therefore the letter-writer must mean, that it is asserted in the pamphlet from which he pretended to quote, that Ben had said so. But Ben could not possibly have said so, even if he had written this epigram at the time to which it has been falsely ascribed; for this plain reason, that *The Ladies’ Trial* was not produced till several years afterwards. It was first printed in 1639, two years after Ben Jonson’s death, and does not appear to have been licensed by Sir Henry Herbert before that time.⁸ The origin of this note, by which *confusion is worse confounded*, was probably this: Langbaine under the article, *Fletcher*, mentions that a scene in his *Love’s Pilgrimage* was *stollen* from the very play of which we have been speaking; Jonson’s *New Inn*. This scene Fletcher himself could not have stolen from *The New Inn*, for he was dead some years before that play appeared; but Shirley, who had the revival of some of those pieces which were left imperfect by Fletcher, (as appears from Sir Henry

⁸ One of the leaves of Sir Henry Herbert’s Manuscript, which was missing, having been recovered since this page was printed, I find that *The Ladies Trial* was performed for the first time at the Cockpit theatre in May 1638, on the 3d of which month it was licensed by the Master of the Revels.

Herbert's Office-book,⁹) finding *The New Inn* unsuccessful, took the liberty to borrow a scene from it, which he inserted in *Love's Pilgrimage*, when that play was revived, or as Sir Henry Herbert calls it, *renewed*, in 1635.² Mr. M. had probably some imperfect recollection of what he had read in Langbaine, and found it convenient to substitute Ford's play for that of Fletcher.

We are next told, that this pamphlet asserts that Ben Jonson had given out that *The Lover's Melan-*

⁹ In Sir Henry Herbert's Office-book is the following entry :
 " For a play of Fletcher's, *corrected by Shirley*, called *The Night-Walkers*, the 11th of May, 1633,—£.2 0 0.

² " Received of Blagrove from the King's Company, for the *renewing of Love's Pilgrimage*, the 16th of September, 1635,—£.1 0 0." *Ibidem*.

The addition of a new scene, and sometimes an entire act, to an old play, appears from the following entries in the same book to have been common :

" For the adding of a scene to *The Virgin Martyr*, this 7th July, 1624,—£.0 10 0."

" For allowing of a new act in an ould play, this 13th May, 1629,—£.0 10 0."

" For allowing of an ould play, new written or forbisht by Mr. Biston, the 12th of January, 1631,—£.1 0 0."

" An ould play, with some new scenes, *Doctor Lambe and the Witches*, to Salisbury Courte, the 16th August, 1634,—£.1 0 0."

Received of ould Cartwright for allowing the [Fortune] company to add scenes to an ould play, and to give it out for a new one, this 12th of May, 1636,—£.1 0 0."

This practice prevailed in Shakspeare's time. " The players," says Lupton, in his *London and the Country carbonadoed and quartered*, 8vo. 1602, " are as crafty with an old play, as bauds with old faces : the one puts on a new fresh colour, the other a new face and name."

If the Office-books of Edmund Tilney, Esq. and Sir George Buck, who were Masters of the Revels during the greater part of the reign of King James the First, shall ever be discovered, I have no doubt that the *Vision*, *Masque*, and *Prophecy*, in the fifth act of *Cymbeline*, will be found to have been interpolated by the players after our poet's death.

choly was not written by Ford, but purloined from Shakspeare's papers, of which Ford in conjunction with Heminge and Condell is said to have had the revisal, when the first folio edition of our poet's works was published in 1623.

It should not be forgotten, that the writer of this letter had asserted in a former letter, that it appears from *several of Ford's Sonnets and Verses* that he lived in the strictest intimacy with Shakspeare, to the time of his death: and I may confidently add, that there is not the smallest ground for the assertion, no such sonnets or verses being extant. We need not, therefore, hesitate to pronounce the present assertion to be equally unfounded as the former.

After what has been already stated, it would be an idle waste of time to enter into any long disquisition on this fiction. It was evidently thrown out to excite the expectation of the town with respect to the piece itself on the night of performance. The old plays of the minor poets of the last age being in 1748 little known or attended to, those who were curious could not easily satisfy themselves concerning the merit or demerit of *The Lover's Melancholy* by reading it, (it not being republished in Dodsley's Collection,) and therefore would naturally resort to the theatre to examine whether there was any ground for such an assertion: the precise end which the letter writer had in view. When he talked of Shakspeare's *papers*, he was probably thinking of what Heminge and Condell have said in their preface,—“we have scarce received from him a blot in *his papers*.” But by *his papers* they meant nothing more than the old copies of his plays which had lain long in their house, from which they printed part of their edition.

Whatever other papers our poet left, without doubt devolved to his family at Stratford.

The four encomiastick lines signed "Thomas May," and the elegant verses ascribed to Endymion Porter, now alone remain to be considered.

Endymion Porter, whom Sir William Davenant, Shakspeare's supposed son, calls "lord of his muse and heart," being mentioned by Mr. Rowe in his *Life of Shakspeare*, as a great admirer of our poet, his name naturally presented itself to the writer of this letter, as a proper one to be subscribed to an eulogy on him and Ford; and he found, or might have found, in Langbaine's *Account of the Dramatick Poets*, that May lived in the strictest intimacy with Endymion Porter, to whom he has dedicated his *Antigone*, published in 1631; a play which probably, when this letter was written, was in Mr. Macklin's possession. Thomas Randolph and Thomas Carew having each of them written verses to Jonson after the publication of the celebrated ode annexed to his unfortunate *New Inn*, requesting him not to leave the stage, as the letter-writer might also have learned from Langbaine, who has given Randolph's Ode at length, he naturally would read over their lines; and Randolph having written "*A gratulatory Poem to Ben Jonson for his adopting of him to be his Son*," in which we find the following hyperbolical couplet,

"But if heaven take thee, envying us thy lyre,

" 'Tis to pen anthems for an angel's quire ;"

he is not improperly styled by the letter-writer, "Jonson's ZANY."³

³ Randolph's attachment to Ben Jonson was also noticed in the letter printed in the preceding month, in *The General Advertiser*, (the *Theatrical Gazette* of that time,) by way of prelude to Mr.

The four lines to which May's name is affixed, are inscribed, "To *my worthy friend John Ford*;" and it is observable that a copy of verses written by William Singleton, and prefixed to *The Lover's Melancholy*, are also inscribed, "To *my worthy friend, the author, Master John Ford*." But why, we shall be told, might not May, as well as Mr. Singleton, address Ford as his *worthy friend*? Be it so then; but unluckily, May, precisely when he is supposed to have made this panegyrick upon Ford, and to have informed the publick, that, even supposing *The Lover's Melancholy* was from Shakspeare's

" ——— *treasury* reft,

" That *plunderer Ben* ne'er made so *rich a theft*;"

unluckily, I say, at this very time, May was living in the strictest friendship with Jonson; for to May's translation of Lucan, published in 1630, is prefixed a commendatory poem by Jonson,—addressed "To his *chosen friend, the learned translator of Lucan, Thomas May, Esquire*," and subscribed, "*Your true friend in judgment and choise, Benjamin Jonson*."

The verses subscribed, *Thomas May*, are as follows:

" 'Tis said, from Shakspeare's *mine* your play you drew;

" What need, when Shakspeare still survives in you?

" But grant it were from his *vast treasury* reft,

" That *plunderer Ben* ne'er made so *rich a theft*."

I have already observed, that, Randolph having

Ryan's benefit. "He was, says the writer, a man of pregnant wit, gay humour, and of excellent learning; which gained him the esteem of the town, and particularly recommended him to *Ben Jonson*, who adopted him *one of his sons*, and held him in equal esteem with the ingenious Mr. Cartwright, another of the laureat's adopted sons."

written a reply to Jonson's ode, the writer of this letter would naturally look into his works. In a poem *addressed to Ben Jonson*, speaking of the works of Aristotle, (the writer by the way, to whom that sentence of Greek which is found in the title-page of the present edition was originally applied,) he has these lines :

“ ————— I could sit
 “ Under a willow covert, and repeat
 “ Those deep and learned lays, on every part
 “ Grounded in judgment, subtilty, and art,
 “ That the great tutor to the greatest king,
 “ The shepherd of Stagira us'd to sing ;
 “ The shepherd of Stagira, *that unfolds*
 “ *All nature's closet*, shews what e'er it holds,
 “ The matter, form, sense, motion, place, and measure,
 “ Of every thing contain'd in her *vast treasury*.”

As Shakspeare's “ *vast treasury*” may have been borrowed from this writer, so the “ *rich thefts* of that *plunderer Ben*” might have been suggested to Mr. M. by the following lines addressed by Thomas Carew “to Ben Jonson, upon occasion of his ode of defiance annexed to his play of the *New Inn* :”

“ Let them the dear expence of oil upbraid,
 “ Suck'd by thy watchful lamp, that hath betray'd
 “ To *theft* the blood of martyr'd authors, spilt
 “ Into thy ink, whilst thou grow'st pale with guilt.
 “ Repine not at the taper's thrifty waste,
 “ That fleeks thy terser poems ; nor is haste
 “ Praise, but excuse ; and if thou overcome
 “ A knotty writer, bring the *booty* home ;
 “ Nor think it *theft*, if the *rich* spoils so torn
 “ From conquer'd authors, be as trophies worn.”

I have traced the marked expressions in this tetrastick to Randolph and Carew ; they might, however, have been suggested by a book still more

likely to have been consulted by the writer of it, Langbaine's *Account of the Dramatick Poets*; and particularly by that part of his work in which he speaks of *Ben Jonson's* literary *thefts*, on which I have this moment happened to cast my eye.

“ To come lastly to *Ben Jonson*, who, as Mr. Dryden affirms, has borrowed more from the ancients than any; I crave leave to say in his behalf, that our late laureat has far out-done him in *thefts*.—When Mr. Jonson borrowed, 'twas from the *treasury* of the Ancients, which is so far from any diminution of his worth, that I think it is to his honour, at least-wise I am sure he is justified by his son Cartwright, in the following lines :

“ What though thy searching Muse did rake the dust
 “ Oft time, and purge old metals from their rust ?
 “ Is it no labour, no art, think they, to
 “ Snatch shipwrecks from the deep, as divers do ;
 “ And rescue jewels from the covetous sand,
 “ Making the seas hid *wealth* adorn the land ?
 “ What though thy culling Muse did *rob* the store
 “ Of Greek and Latin gardens, to bring o'er
 “ Plants to thy native soil ? their virtues were
 “ Improv'd far more by being planted here.—
 “ *Thefts* thus become just works ; they and their grace
 “ Are wholly thine : thus doth the stamp and face
 “ Make that the king's that's ravish'd from the *mine* ;
 “ In others then 'tis ore, in thee 'tis coin.”

“ On the contrary, though Mr. Dryden has likewise borrowed from the Greek and Latin poets,—which I purposely omit to tax him with, as thinking what he has taken to be lawful prize, yet I can not but observe withal, that he has *plunder'd* the chief Italian, Spanish, and French wits for forage, notwithstanding his pretended contempt of them ; and not only so, but even his own countrymen have been forced to pay him tribute,

or, to say better, have not been exempt from being pillaged." ⁴

Here we have at once—the *mine*, the *treasury*, the *plunderer*, and the *rich thefts*, of this modern-antique composition. ⁵

⁴ *Account of the Dramatick Poets*, 8vo. 1691, pp. 145, 148, 149.

⁵ Mr. Macklin tells us, that the pamphlet from which he pretends to quote, mentions, that among other depreciating language Jonson had said of Shakspeare, that "the man had imagination and *wit* none could deny, but that they were ever guided by true judgment in the *rules* and conduct of a piece, none could with justice assert, both being ever servile to *raise the laughter of fools* and the *wonder of the ignorant*."

"Being guided by judgment in the conduct of a piece," is perfectly intelligible; but what are we to understand by *being guided by judgment in the rules of a piece*? However, every part of this sentence also may be traced to its source. Mr. Pope has said in his preface, that "not only the common audience had no notion of the *rules* of writing, but few of the better sort piqued themselves upon any great degree of knowledge or nicety that way, till Ben Jonson getting possession of the stage, brought critical learning into vogue:" and Jonson himself in his *Discoveries*, speaking of Shakspeare, says, "his *wit* was in his power, would the *rule* of it had been so."

In Mr. Pope's Preface we are told, that "in tragedy nothing was so sure to *surprise*, and create *admiration*, as the most strange, improbable, and consequently most unnatural, incidents, and events.—In comedy, nothing was so sure to please, as mean buffoonery, vile ribaldry and unmannerly jests of *fools* and clowns."

Prefixed to Randolph's Works is a panegyrick written by Mr. Richard West, from whose poem two lines are quoted by Langbaine, which were also inserted in *The General Advertiser* of the 5th of March 1748, in the encomium on Randolph's plays.

In Mr. West's Verses, speaking of ordinary dramatick poets, he says,

- "For humours to lie leiger, they are seen
- "Oft in a tavern or a bowling-green,
- "They do observe each place and company,
- "As strictly as a traveller or spy;—
- "And sit with patience an hour by the heels,
- "To learn the nonsense of the constables;

The last copy of verses, ascribed to Endymion Porter, are uncommonly elegant, and perhaps one of the best invented fictions that can be pointed out. “These *letter-tyrant* elves” is much in the manner of the time, as is “*their pedant selves*,” in a subsequent line. But how difficult is it to assume the manner or language of a former age, without occasionally lapsing into those of the present! The phrases, “*upon the whole*,” and *from college*,—

“Indeed, says Tom, *upon the whole*, &c.

“But Ben and Tom *from college*—”

have a very modern sound, and are not, I believe, used by any of our old English writers.—I must also observe that Mr. M. found his *after-times* in the old panegyrick on Ford, which he inserted in his first letter, and *Avon's swan* in Ben Jonson's Verses on Shakspeare, prefixed to all the editions of his plays; and that the extravagant and unfounded praise here given to Ford, who, like our great poet, is said to have been *sent from heaven*, and the insinuation that the *Lover's Melancholy* was “*Shakspeare's every word*,” were evidently calcu-

“*Such jig-like flim-flams being got, to make*

“*The rabble laugh, and nut-cracking forsake.*”

Randolph is then described, and among other high praises, we are told,

“There's none need fear to surfeit with his phrase;

“He has no giant raptures, to amaze

“And torture *weak capacities with wonder.*”

We have already seen that Mr. Macklin had been just perusing Ben Jonson's Epigrams. In his second Epigram, which is addressed to his book, are these lines:

“— by thy wiser temper let men know,

“Thou art not covetous of least self-fame,

“Made from the hazard of another's shame:

“Much less, with lewd, prophane, and beastly phrase,

“*To catch the world's loose laughter, or vaine gaze.*”

lated for the temporary purpose of aiding a benefit, and putting money into the purse of the writer.

While, however, we transfer these elegant lines from Endymion Porter to Mr. Macklin, let us not forget that they exhibit no common specimen of an easy versification and a good taste, and that they add a new wreath to the poetical crown of this veteran comedian.

I have only to add, that John Ford and Thomas May were so far from being at variance with Old Ben, that in *Jonsonius Virbius*, a collection of poems on the death of Ben Jonson, published in 1638, about six months after his death, there is an encomiastick poem by *John Ford*; and in this volume is also found a panegyrick by Ford's friend, George Donne, and another by *Thomas May*, who styles Ben "the best of our English poets." On this, however, I lay no great stress, because the same collection exhibits a poem by Jonson's old antagonist, Owen Feltham: but if, after all that has been stated, the smallest doubt could remain concerning the subject of our present disquisition, I might observe, that Ford appears not only to have lived on amicable terms with Ben Jonson himself, (at least we have no proof to the contrary,) but with his servant, Richard Brome; to whose play entitled *The Northern Lass*, which was acted by the King's Company on the 29th of July 1629, the very year of the publication of *The Lover's Melancholy*, and of the first exhibition of *The New Inn*, is prefixed an high panegyrick by "the author's very friend, *John Ford*."

Let the present detection be a lesson to mankind in matters of greater moment, and teach those whom higher considerations do not deter from invading the rights or property of others by any kind of fiction, to abstain from such an attempt, from

the *inefficacy* and *folly* of it; for the most plausible and best fabricated tale, if properly examined, will crumble to pieces, like "the labour'd mole," loosened from its foundation by the continued force of the ocean; while simple and honest truth, firm and self-dependent, will ever maintain its ground against all assailants,—

"As rocks resist the billows and the sky."

MALONE.

"AND flies the javelin swifter to its mark,
"Launch'd from the vigour of a Roman arm?"⁶

If so, in compliance with example, and supposing Mr. *Malone's* motto to point at Mr. *Macklin*, I shall venture a reply in his name, and from Virgil too:—

Stat gravis Entellus, nisuque immotus eodem.

Though the letter [See Vol. II. p. 502, &c. n. 2.] which gave rise to the preceding strictures (as Dr. *Farmer* long ago remarked) may not be entitled to implicit confidence, I am unwilling to regard this publication as a confirmed forgery by Mr. *Macklin*. In my opinion, he could as readily have supplied a deficient chorus in a Greek tragedy, as the poem ascribed to *Endymion Porter*. A vein of broad humour, and a rugged force of style, distinguish the performances of our truly respectable drama-

⁶ Addison's *Cato*.

tick veteran; but where, among all his numerous works, shall we find such ease and elegance as decorate the stanzas in commendation of *Ford*?

It would be difficult to account for Mr. *Macklin's* conception of the species of fraud so strenuously imputed to him. Unacquainted with ancient and licensed polemick weapons, he would scarce have invented new and unfair ones. Before the year 1748 no successful impositions, whether grave or ludicrous, had led the way to such an attempt. No *Lauder*, by a kindred process, had questioned the originality of *Milton*; no *Rowleian* epicks, or *Hardicnutian* tablets⁷ had been applied as touchstones to antiquarian sagacity. If Mr. *Macklin* was really the fabricator of these disputed authorities, he must be considered as the parent of literary impostures in England. He must have planned his work without the advantage of a model; and, respecting the poetry of *Endymion Porter*, must be allowed to have executed a task of elegance, without ostensible requisites for his undertaking.—When I communicated these stanzas to Dr. *Johnson*, he read them with indications of pleasure, and instantly exclaimed—"The lines, sir, are evidently the product of a man of fashion."⁸ Were our friend *Beauclerk** engaged to furnish a poetick trifle, he would write just such verses as these."

That no pamphlet, however, with the title already mentioned by Mr. *Malone*, has ever appeared, is too much to be granted without some

⁷ See the *Gentleman's* and *European Magazine* for March and April, 1790.

⁸ Such undoubtedly was the character of *Endymion Porter*, who was a Gentleman of his Majesty's Bedchamber.

* The late Honourable Topham Beauclerk.

degree of hesitation. Must no ancient satirical and poetical pieces be allowed to exist, except such as he and I have unkennelled by industry or advertisement? Till the earliest *Taming of a Shrew* was met with, Mr. *Pope's* quotations from it were suspected; for some of the lines, as printed by him, displayed more than a single deviation from the established phraseology of their age; and yet, on the whole, we are bound to acknowledge the genuineness of his extracts from the rude original of Shakspeare's comedy.⁹

The rarity of particular books as well as pamphlets, has been occasioned by obvious circumstances. Sometimes a fire has almost destroyed an unpublished work. At other times, a threat has suppressed an invective, or a bribe has stifled an accusation. It were no task of difficulty to enumerate tracts, of each of which but a single copy has been discovered.

⁹ I know not from what cause it has arisen, but I think I have observed a more than common degree of inaccuracy in facts and dates relative to the stage, as often as they become objects for the memory to exercise itself upon. No conclusive arguments, I am sure, can be drawn from the falsehoods or mistakes in the piece under consideration, to prove the non-existence of it. Immediately on the death of Mr. *Quin* in 1766, a pamphlet was published professing to be an account of his Life, in which the fact of his having killed a brother actor was related; but so related, that no one circumstance belonging to it could be depended on, except that a man was killed. Neither the time when the accident happened, the place where, the cause of the quarrel, the progress of it, or even the name or identity of the person, were stated agreeable to truth; and all these fables were imposed on the publick at a time when many people were living, who could have contradicted them from their own personal knowledge. To apply this to the present case: suppose at the distance of more than a century, one single copy only of this Life (no improbable supposition) should remain, and after being quoted should be lost; the facts which it contains might be demonstrated to be untrue, but the non-existence of the work referred to, surely would not thereby be established. REED.

I readily allow, and in their utmost extent, such departures from the acknowledged truth of dramatick history, as are pointed out by Mr. *Malone* with his accustomed accuracy and precision. But he has not proved that those very defects might not have originated from the pamphlet supposed to have furnished Mr. *Macklin* with materials for his letter. Does it follow that the pamphleteer himself must have been qualified for his task? Might he not rather have been some inaccurate hireling, who tacked together, for purposes now unknown, the disjointed and fallacious scraps of literary intelligence which every theatre usually supplies?

Let us likewise inquire, whether such extracts from an antiquated pamphlet as are hastily made by a person unskilled in argument and composition, may not exhibit blunders and contradictions which had no place in the work from whence his *notitiæ* were derived. By injudicious retrenchments, therefore, of the intelligence Mr. *Macklin* adopted, and a heterogeneous mixture of his own conceptions, he may have perplexed his narrative so effectually, that, without reference to his original document, the truths in question must escape the reach of human inquiry:

“ ————— the dram of base
“ Doth all the noble substance often dout.”

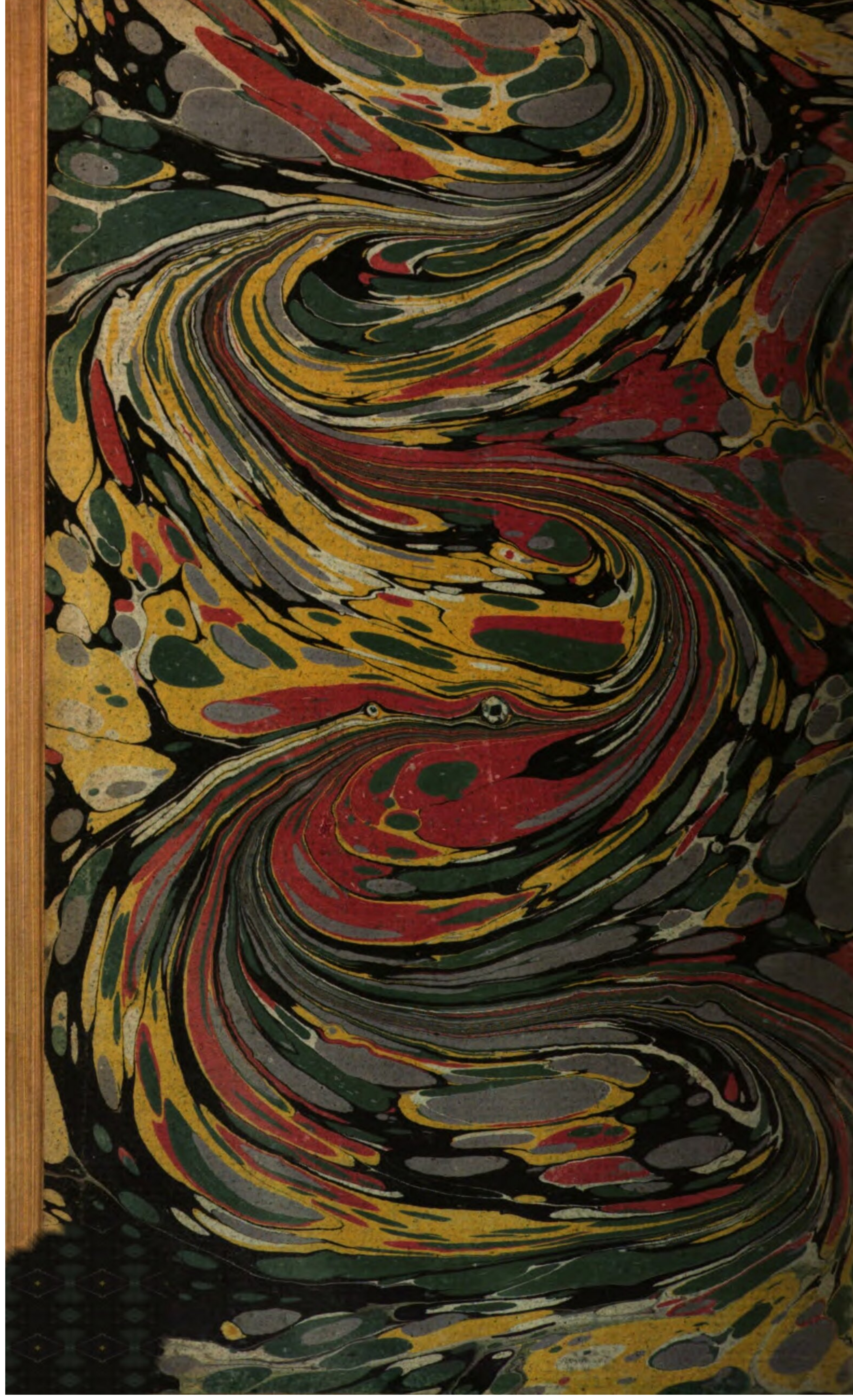
In justice to Mr. *Macklin* and myself, I must add, that in 1777 when he first related the history of his lost pamphlet, he subjoined the following remarkable circumstance, which could not well have been invented on a sudden for the purposes of deceit.—“ The want of this publication (says he) I do not so much lament, as the loss of a speech on the Habeas Corpus by Sir J. Elliot, which,

(with several other tracts printed about the same time,) was in the same quarto volume."—Every collector of fugitive publications must know how usual it is for coeval articles, however miscellaneous, to be bound together. This circumstance, in my judgement, adds no small probability to the narrative in which Mr. *Macklin* still persists; for the speech to which he alluded, must have been published in or about the very year that produced "Old Ben's Light Heart" &c. provided a pamphlet bearing that title was ever issued from the press.

It has been by no means my desire to controvert the sentiments of Mr. *Malone*, any further than was needful toward my own apology as the first republisher of Mr. *Macklin's* production. Mr. *Malone's* ingenuity in support of his position, demands an acknowledgement which is cheerfully bestowed; and yet, considering the labour he has expended on so slight a subject, I cannot help comparing him to one who brings a sledge hammer for the demolition of a house of cards.

STEEVENS.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616 / Johnson, Samuel / Steevens, Georges

Plays

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